AN

ESSAY

On the ſeveral

DISPENSATIONS of GOD to Mankind, in the Order, in which they lie in the Bible:

OR, A

Short SYSTEM of the Religion of *Nature* and *Scripture:*

WITH A

PREFACE, ſhewing the Cauſes of the Growth of Infidelity, and the likelieſt Method to put a Stop to it.

AND AN

APPENDIX, proving, that God adopted *Abraham* to the Inheritance of eternal Life, *Gen.* xii. 2, 3. xxii. 17, 18.

God who at SUNDRY TIMES, AND IN DIVERS MANNERS, ſpake unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt Days ſpoken unto us by his Son, *Heb.* i. 1, 2.

ADAM, who was THE SON OF GOD, *Luke* iii. 38.

The SONS OF GOD ſaw the DAUGHTERS OF MEN, *Gen.* vi. 2.

They which are of Faith, the ſame are the CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM, *Gal.* iii. 7.

Iſrael is my SON, even my firſt BORN, (*Exod.* iv. 22.)

-- Saying, unto thee will I give the Land of CANAAN, the Lot of your INHERITANCE, *Pſal.* cv. 11

Ye are the CHILDREN of the PROPHETS, *Acts* iii. 25.

Ye are ALL the CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS, *Gal.* iii. 26.

And if ye be CHRIST's, then are ye ABRAHAM's SEED, and Heirs according to the Promiſe, *Gal.* iii. 29.

And are the Sons of God, being the SONS OF THE RESURRECTION, *Luke* xx. 36.

Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God. -- Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know, THAT WHEN HE APPEARETH, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, 1 *John* iii. 1, 2.

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THE PREFACE.

IT ſeems to be a prevailing Opinion, that Deiſm gets Ground among thinking and virtuous Men; notwithſtanding many excellent Tracts that have appeared of late in Defence of Chriſtianity, by bringing together the external Evidence there is for it, and ſupporting it againſt the Exceptions that have been made to that Evidence.

It muſt needs be very fit for Believers to conſider, what may be the Cauſes of ſo ſtrange and threatning an Appearance; ſince the being thoroughly appriz'd of the Cauſe of the Growth of Infidelity, can alone direct us to the beſt Method to prevent it.

I am ſenſible, There are ſome, who will think much Enquiry about this Matter altogether needleſs; ſatisfying themſelves with reſolving the Growth of Deiſm into God's delivering Men up to a reprobate Senſe, who don't care to retain the Knowledge of him in their Minds. *But I muſt take Liberty to ſay, that theſe Perſons entirely miſtake the Enquiry; which is not about the Growth of Deiſm among careleſs, ſcoffing, and vitious; but among thoughtful and virtuous Men.*

I am ſenſible too there are others, who inſtead of going further into this Enquiry, will do nothing more than inveigh againſt Liberty, (the Glory of the Age we live in) and the Inquiſitiveneſs and Freedom of Debate which it has introduc'd, to the great Advancement of Learning and Virtue among us. It muſt be allowed to theſe Declaimers, that Men, who don't think at all about Religion, will not be Deiſts: But neither will they be Believers. They may indeed have the Faith of a Stone (that is, no Disbelief of any Thing) or the Faith of a Parrot (that is, Words without Ideas) but cannot have the rational Faith of a Man, that is, a Belief of the Agreement or Diſagreement of Ideas founded on what they have juſt Reaſon to apprehend to be divine Teſtimony. We muſt therefore be content with Things as they are, and let Unbelievers be among us, in order to have Believers; and not be ſo angry or diſturb'd

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that Deiſm grows, provided that a rational Faith grows along with it. For it is a much happier State to have the Number of rational Believers increaſe in a Nation, together with a Number of Deiſts, than to have all People ſceptical, or entirely careleſs and inſenſible about the Matter. That is, it is better to have a Nation made up of rational Believers and of Disbelievers, than of nominal Believers only (whether they are ſceptical or careleſs, or inſenſible) who are really no Believers at all. For to ſay otherwiſe, is to ſay, that no Believers are better than ſome Believers.

But to come cloſer to the Enquiry, for the ſake of thoſe who are willing to enter into it; I muſt lay this as a Foundation in it, that no Man, who believes there is a God, and does but at all reflect on what follows from that Belief, can bring himſelf to think, that God has not Ways to impart more Knowledge to us, than we can arrive at by the bare Uſe of the Faculties he has given us: Or to doubt, whether Mankind has not been, is not, and will not be, in ſuch Circumſtances, in which it may have been, is, and will be very ſuitable to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to impart more Knowledge to them, than they can arrive at by the bare Uſe of their Faculties, the better to enable them to diſcharge the Duties they owe to him, themſelves, and one another: Or in other Words, to act according to the Truth of Things, and conſequently according

cording to the true Maxims of their own Happineſs, and the Happineſs of others. And rational Beings can only be better enabled to all this, by ſuch Knowledge being imparted to them, as may aſſiſt them under the Weakneſs of their Reaſon, (from their ſhort and narrow Views of Things) and againſt the Strength of their Appetites and Paſſions. Every conſidering Man therefore muſt ſee, that if God is pleaſed to impart more Knowledge to Mankind, than their Faculties will diſcover to them, it muſt be to this Purpoſe; ſince ſuch a Diſcovery alone is conſiſtent with his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; or with that prior Knowledge he has given us, by the bare Uſe of our Faculties, and by the Opportunities he has vouchſafed us for the Exerciſe of them.

And as no Man can reaſonably receive any Thing, as a Revelation from God, conſidered as the Governor of the World, that has not evidently theſe Characters and Tendencies; ſo no Man can reaſonably reject any Thing as ſuch a Revelation that has them, and that has no others, inconſiſtent with them.

Revelation therefore appearing clearly in the Times of the Apoſtles, (when it was beſt underſtood) with theſe Characters and Tendencies, and being ſupported by other internal, and by the ſtrongeſt external Evidence, offered to the Senſes of thoſe to whom it was propoſed; and the Apoſtles being at hand to clear

clear up any Difficulty that might ariſe againſt it, it is no wonder that none then could disbelieve or doubt of it; though but too many refus'd to live up to its Precepts, and profeſs'd to reject it, purely becauſe they preferr'd their Luſts and Paſſions to Virtue and Holineſs, and to eternal Life, which Revelation propos'd as the Motive to deny the one, and to purſue the other. But in this they were firſt ſelf-condemn'd, afterwards their Conſciences became ſeared as with a red hot Iron, *and they themſelves at laſt were given up to believe a Lie.*

But in after Times Things came under a very different Conſideration. For Revelation could not be ſo well underſtood, when the Apoſtles ceas'd to be its Miniſters: Eſpecially if their Doctrine was corrupted by others. Nor could the Proof that their pure Doctrine really was their Doctrine, or that it was ſo atteſted, as it purports to be, be ſo ſtrong in after Times, as it was in their Times; ſince the Proof in all after Times muſt be made, by an Appeal to the Reaſon of Mankind only, and not to their Senſes.

We have now more Difficulties to get at the true Senſe and Meaning of Revelation, than attends any Piece of the greateſt Antiquity; and we have none of the Illuminated or Inſpired to reſort to under this Difficulty.

Inſtead of that Aſſiſtance, we have many unneceſſary Difficulties flung in our way.

Seve-

Several of the Patrons of Revelation have laid more weight upon it than it can bear. For whereas Revelation, as it was delivered by Patriarchs or Prophets, by Christ or his Apostles, was only proposed in Aid of natural Religion, and recommended as highly useful; many since have insisted, that it is absolutely necessary; not barely to give us a Title, on which we may claim eternal Life, as eternal Life is described in Scripture, (which may be justly said according to the Doctrine of Revelation) but to secure Men from eternal Damnation, and to obtain any degree of the Favour of God in another World. But as soon as Persons, to whom Revelation is recommended as thus absolutely necessary, come to see, that it is not so, nor can't be so; as they soon will; it may very easily happen, that they will not trouble their Heads any more about it; and finding the Opinion, that it is absolutely necessary, a great Extreme, may, without thinking further, (as indeed they ought) run into another, (as is but too common in these Cases,) and think it entirely useless.

Other Advocates for Revelation, who have understood it better than the former, have indeed pleaded for it only as useful; but many of them in explaining the main Use it is of, have not shewn wherein its great Usefulness consists, as the Apostles always did. I must needs say, I cannot but think the rational Divines, as they are called, very faulty on

this Head; not to mention others. For they, having conſidered Revelation, as deſigned to do nothing, but to give a freſh Publication of natural Religion, make it of little Uſe now to any but the Mob (whatever it might be of at the Periods in which it was made) nor of any great Uſe to them neither. But every one will eaſily ſee, that the ſinking the Uſe of Revelation ſo low, is no ways ſuitable to all the Apparatus *of Revelation: Eſpecially of the laſt and moſt perfect Revelation which God made by his Son; who in order thereto took Fleſh, died on the Croſs, roſe from the Dead, and aſcended into Heaven, and had all Power conferr'd upon him, till the Conſummation of all Things. The peculiar Doctrines of Revelation can never be the Duties of natural Religion; as they have been too much ſuppoſed to be by theſe Divines; but Doctrines to aſſiſt us to perform them. In what way Revelation does this, will be the Buſineſs of the following Eſſay; and thither therefore the Reader muſt be referr'd; in the mean Time this Miſtake (and which unhappily for Revelation has been but too common) perhaps has had almoſt as bad an Effect as the former; and made thoſe to whom Revelation has been only recommended by a very low, or by an intirely miſplaced Uſefulneſs, from ſeeing it to be of little Conſequence, or its Uſefulneſs wrong placed, either to reject Revelation, or at leaſt think no farther about it.*

I can't but think too, that Revelation has ſuffer'd very much from a too partial Conſideration of it. When obſerving Men ſee the Patrons of Revelation apply themſelves wholly to the Explication and Defence of Chriſtianity, they preſently conclude, that the Patrons of thoſe Doctrines have but an indifferent Opinion of the Old Teſtament, and that 'tis for that Reaſon, they don't ſet themſelves to conſider it. Whereas Chriſtianity is but the laſt Link in a Chain of Truth, that conſiſts of ſeveral others. And he that pretends to ſhew a Chain of Truth, muſt ſhew not one Link only, but ſeveral; and ſhew that they are linked with the firſt, and with one another.

But yet Revelation has ſuffered much more from another Quarter than any of theſe that I have already mentioned. For though no Knowledge, as has been already obſerved, can be ſuppos'd to come from God, as the Governor of the World, that is not of common Uſe and Advantage to Mankind, yet Pretences to Revelation being ſo capable of ſerving private and ſelfiſh Ends, (utterly inconſiſtent with all Happineſs that is as high and unmix'd as we are capable of, and muſt laſt as long as our Beings, or that may add to the Happineſs of others) Men of ambitious and covetous Minds have not only in all Ages pretended to Revelations, which they never had, in order to accompliſh their baſe and wicked Deſigns; but have ſo miſrepreſented the Revelation

that

that is from God, as to make it more inconſiſtent with all the Characters and Ends of a divine Revelation, than any of the counterfeit Revelations, that have gain'd Credit in any Age of the World. Theſe Men have debaſed Revelation from being the moſt rational and uſeful Diſcovery, into one that is almoſt equally abſurd, and more pernicious, than any other religious Forgery or Impoſture whatſoever: Whereby they have made ſome well diſpoſed Men not only reject it, but become keen and bigotted againſt it. The Apoſtles laid no ſuch ſtumbling Blocks in the Way of thoſe who were diſpoſed to receive Revelation. They were free from all Enthuſiaſm, utter'd no Jargon, taught no Abſurdities and Contradictions: They us'd no Charms, or Spells, added no idle Fopperies to Religion, nor any coſtly Decorations: Nor pretended to any uſurp'd oppreſſive Powers to ſupport it: Much leſs did they pretend, that the whole of Revelation was made up of theſe, or of any one of them. They renounced all theſe Things, and every other hidden Art of Diſhoneſty, calculated only to raiſe an high Domination, Power and Profit to themſelves, or to any Believers that were to follow them, on the Ruins of the Senſe, Freedom and Property of others. On the other Hand, they recommended Revelation to their Hearers, by teaching clearly the unſophiſticated Word of God; accompanied by the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of

Power; *and by* approving themſelves, *through the greateſt Humility, Meekneſs, Diligence, Courage, Patience and Succeſs*, to every Man's Conſcience, in the Sight of God.

Theſe Things which I have mentioned appear to me to be the Difficulties that prevent the virtuous Deiſts from receiving Revelation, either as thoſe Difficulties ariſe from Revelation it ſelf, as it is now circumſtanc'd, or from the Miſtakes its Patrons have made in recommending, or in explaining it. We have now indeed the Bible before us, and may thereby clear Revelation from all theſe Miſtakes; we may ſee on what Foot it recommends it ſelf to our Conſideration, and what it really is. But here Men meet with Difficulties in themſelves, and which are far from being leſſened by the Miſrepreſentations I have juſt now mentioned. For it is certain, that to get at the true Senſe of the Bible, as it is a conſiſtent Syſtem of uſeful Knowledge, there muſt go great Leiſure, Care and Ability. And yet ſtill Revelation is rejected by ſome well diſpoſed Men, who want none of theſe, without ſo much as looking into it: The Reaſon of which is, that they take it for granted, that that is the View and the Senſe of Revelation, which ſome of its Profeſſors and Interpreters have put upon it. It is certain this is far from being any Inſtance of their good Diſpoſitions. However, whilſt from theſe Miſrepreſentations, they think it either uſeleſs

uſeleſs or pernicious, they will perhaps think themſelves under no more Obligation, or find no more Inclination to ſtudy the Bible, or attend to the Evidence there is for the Truth of it, than they feel within themſelves to ſtudy any other idle Enthuſiaſm or Reverie, or any Piece of Impoſture or Forgery; or to attend to the Evidence that may be offer'd in behalf of them.

If they go ſo far, under theſe Prejudices, as to look into the Bible; yet it is odds, if they don't read it, in order to fortify theſe Prejudices. It is ſtill greater Odds if when they go to ſtudy the Bible, they entirely diveſt themſelves of them, and read it with the Spirit of Candor and Equity. And it is yet the greateſt Odds of all, if they read it with that Attention and critical Skill that is neceſſary to underſtand any Piece of Antiquity, and particularly the Bible; part of it being the moſt ancient Book that is preſerv'd to us, that can receive little foreign Aſſiſtance towards the underſtanding any Thing of it, and that can have no foreign Aſſiſtance at all, in relation to the peculiar Matter of it. And I take this (viz. *the not ſtudying the Bible in a critical Way*) *to be one of the greateſt Cauſes of the Growth of Deiſm among thoughtful and virtuous Men. I mean of thoſe Cauſes which ariſe from within themſelves. And I think it will appear to be ſo, if we conſult ever ſo little the Hiſtory of the Learned. For we ſhall find,*

that

that ſome of the greateſt Men, and the freeſt Enquirers, who have ſtudied the Bible in this Way, have been brought to a ſteady Faith of the Bible, from being entirely careleſs or ſceptical about it, or from a ſettled Disbelief of it: Such as Eraſmus, Grotius, J. G. Voſſius, Locke, Newton, Moyle, *&c. whilſt others, who have not ſtudied it in this Way, from nominal Believers have become Scepticks or Unbelievers; eſpecially if ſome other Things have concurr'd; as if they have been of unattentive or narrow Minds, or have not been us'd to ſo great a Compaſs of Thought as Criticiſm requires —— If they have been us'd to ſtrict Demonſtration, in Parts of Learning that are capable of it, eſpecially in natural Religion; and are thereby much diſpoſed to doubt of every Thing, that has but probable or moral Evidence to ſupport it. —— If from obſerving the pious Frauds that ſo early took Place, and the bad Lives of ſuch as would be thought its beſt Profeſſors, which ſtill continue, they to add to their ſceptical Diſpoſition, Diſtruſt, Suſpicion, and Jealouſy. All theſe, I think, ſhould be conſider'd as an unhappy Turn of Mind, that diſpoſes Men to reliſh Deiſm; eſpecially when they have been ſtrongly diſtaſted at Revelation, by the groſs Miſrepreſentations of it, which I have juſt now mentioned.*

Theſe ſeveral Cauſes conſtitute ſo many different Ranks and Claſſes of virtuous and

thoughtful Deists; which if we consider thus particularly, may furnish us with more just Notions of them, and with better Methods to recover them, than if we should only consider them in the Lump. As to the Case of those nominal Deists, who are so, from being perfectly heedless and unthinking, loose and vitious, it is of a very different Consideration, is not within our Inquiry, and besides, has no Difficulty attending it.

I have thought it, for some Reasons not so proper hitherto to distinguish those, who reject Revelation, from those who don't embrace it, or the real Deists from the Scepticks. Yet I think it very proper, before I go any farther, to say this of them, as well as to them, that though where (they apprehend, on their best Inquiries, that) there is a Want of Proof of the Truth of Revelation; or where there is a Want of Leisure to examine it, their not receiving Revelation may be excus'd, if they can make it appear at the Bar of Him, to whom all Things are naked and manifest, that that was their Case; yet nothing can excuse their rejecting it, and their Zeal to induce others to reject it, but seeing clearly some Thing in it that is absolutely inconsistent with Reason, or with it self. And though upon this foot we may have many Scepticks, yet I think there will not be a great Number of real Deists.

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From what has been ſaid, I think it appears plainly, that the groſs Miſrepreſentation of the Senſe of Revelation has been one of the greateſt Cauſes of Scepticiſm, and of real Deiſm. Whether that Miſrepreſentation be made by venting abſurd and ſuperſtitious Notions, or by ſuperſtitious Practices, which ſuppoſe theſe Notions, and propagate them, makes no difference. Let no Man then complain, that Doubts about Revelation, or the Disbelief of it, ſpread ſo far, or produce the Fruits we daily ſee, who will not ſet himſelf to rectify every Miſrepreſentation that has been made of it. And let not him that will not ſet himſelf about this great Work in good earneſt; and above all, let not him that waters and cheriſhes any of theſe Abſurdities, or any Degree of Superſtition, think, that he has any Right to complain of the Growth either of Scepticiſm or real Deiſm. On the contrary, let him expect nothing leſs, than that ſomewhat of a much more fatal Nature will ſpring up in its Neighbourhood. The Religion of Deiſts is true Religion, though they want the Aid of Revelation, to enable them the better to perform the Duties of their Religion. But Superſtition will as certainly make Atheiſm ſpring up in the Minds of the Looſe and Immoral, as it makes Deiſm grow in the Minds of ſober and thoughtful Men; I mean of Men who think without thinking thoroughly. And woe be to him, whoſe Abſurdities

ſurdities and Superſtition make either of theſe Opinions, but particularly the laſt, like the moſt noxious Weeds, become more rank and prolifick! When inſtead of theſe abſurd and ſuperſtitious Miſrepreſentations of Revelation, Believers will condeſcend to profeſs the Doctrines, pay the Worſhip, and practiſe the Duties of Revelation in its original Simplicity, and after the Model of the great Deliverers of it; then, and not till then, may we expect, that all the virtuous and thoughtful Deiſts will attend to the external Evidence of Chriſtianity, that has been ſo admirably well brought together by ſeveral able Hands, of late, in order the better to ſupport it. But it will be well, if inſtead of this Condeſcenſion, ſome, who would be very angry, if they were not allow'd to be amongſt the beſt Friends of Revelation, are not more incenſed at him, who out of a diſintereſted Regard to Truth, (now that Revelation is under ſo ſtrict a Trial) offers this Reflection to their cool and ſerious Conſideration, than at thoſe very Deiſts, who make it ſo neceſſary to lay it before them.

If the great Cauſe of the Diſbelief of Revelation be ſuch Miſrepreſentations of Revelation, as have made Men think it unneceſſary to attend to it, or neceſſary to oppoſe it; eſpe-

cially falling in with the particular Turn of ſome Mens Minds; it is obvious that the firſt, if not the beſt, Thing that can be done to ſtop the Growth of that Diſbelief, will be to give a true Repreſentation of Revelation; ſo that it may appear a rational, conſiſtent and beautiful Scheme of uſeful Knowledge, and enamour every rational Enquirer with it. From ſuch a Repreſentation of it, we ſhall be beſt able to prove the Truth of it, and to anſwer the Objections that acute Men may raiſe againſt it; and to make the virtuous and thoughtful Deiſts, from ſome Reliſh of it (inſtead of the Diſtaſte they had to it) be willing carefully to attend to every Thing that ſhall be offer'd to ſtate or to ſupport it: Eſpecially ſuch of them as have not themſelves Leiſure, Capacity or Inclination, to come at thoſe Proofs, or make ſuch a Syſtem or Repreſentation of Revelation from the Bible.

Every one knows, that there have been various Syſtems and Compounds of Revelation offered to the World, and many of them, no doubt, for this purpoſe. But I muſt own, that though among thoſe which have fallen in my Way, I have ſeen ſeveral, to which, I believe, the Growth of Deiſm may be juſtly attributed, in this prying Age, from their great Inconſiſtence with Reaſon and Revelation; yet I have not met with any that has, in my Apprehenſion, cloſely follow'd the prevailing Notion,

Notion, *the Method, or the Language of the Bible. And yet it is certain, that none but one that does, can even from the Form of it, be calculated to answer the good End proposed; even if the Matter of it was never so consistent with, or agreeable to the Doctrines of the Bible.*

In order to represent the Sense of the Bible, several Authors have run into a figurative or metaphorical Divinity: And among them, some have not been wanting to pursue these Figures in a very wild and offensive Manner. Metaphors and Allegories, indeed, are justly and beautifully used in the poetical and rhetorical Books of Scripture; but those Figures themselves at best always want a Key; instead of opening the Sense that is couch'd under them.

Others have run into abstracted and metaphysical Notions; which when they are not founded in the Nature of Things, such as the Schoolmen us'd, are ridiculous: And when they are, yet are not of a Piece with the Scripture; which generally represents Things by no other Ideas, than such as are the most common and familiar to us; as being alone suited to the bulk of Mankind, for whose Benefit it is designed.

Others, indeed, have represented the Scheme of Revelation under Notions that are common and familiar, and that are scriptural too.

But then they are ſuch, as are either only topical, that is to ſay, us'd in particular Texts of the Bible; or elſe ſuch as are only ſuited to particular Periods and Diſpenſations. Under this Head, to paſs by other Syſtems, thoſe (which have been of the beſt Deſign) may be rang'd, which have treated Divinity under the Notion of a Covenant, of a Kingdom, or of the Chriſtian Church.

Thoſe who have writ Syſtems of reveal'd Religion in any of theſe Methods, have, beſides the Faults peculiar to each of them, been guilty of one that has been common to them all; namely, that they have compos'd them according to the Rules, in which the Syſtems of other Arts and Sciences are dreſs'd up: But this Method can never make thoſe Syſtems of a Piece with a Revelation which has been deliver'd to Mankind in quite another Manner.

And though ſeveral Divines have avoided theſe miſtaken Methods, when they have handled particular Subjects of Divinity; the Scriptures having been very carefully ſtudied of late in a juſt and critical Way, to the great Honour of the preſent Age, and in which ſome have out-ſhin'd all that have gone before them; yet we have not been favour'd with a finiſh'd Piece of this Kind, or ſo much as with a Sketch of it.

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Thoſe who have come the neareſt to what I aim at, and who ought to have great Merit with all who ſtudy their Bible, are the Divines who have conſidered Revelation hiſtorically, the Way in which Revelation has been conveyed to Mankind. But then ſuch Diſcourſes as theſe are to be conſider'd only as Hiſtories: Which will indeed be of great Uſe to him that will offer a ſcriptural Syſtem to the World, but are not that Syſtem it ſelf; nor may not even help thoſe, who compoſe them, or are inſtructed by them, to the Notion on which that Syſtem muſt be built.

But the Piece or Sketch I aim at is ſuch an one, as will ſhew the ſingle Notion that runs through the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God to Mankind in its full Light, (if it ſhall appear that there is ſuch a Notion) and that purſues it in the preciſe Order and Manner in which it was exhibited in thoſe ſeveral Diſpenſations, and will at the ſame Time ſhew, how all the peculiar Doctrines of Revelation refer to it. For ſuch a Piece or Sketch alone will diſcover to us all the Beauties of revealed Truth; ſhewing it in its proper Connexion and Relations, (particularly its Uſe and Advantage) and in its Unity, the ſtrongeſt internal Evidence, that can accompany it.

How well ſoever therefore others have deſerved in their ſeveral Provinces, yet ſtill, obſerving the great Uſe as well as the Want of ſuch

ſuch an Undertaking, as I have juſt now mentioned, I have been led to offer a rough Draught of this Kind to the Public; in hopes it may receive Amendments from others, if it be capable of it; or that it may ingage thoſe of greater Leiſure and Ability, when they fling this away, to ſubſtitute a Better in the Room of it.

The great Acutcneſs of the Age, and particularly of a diſtinguiſh'd Writer in it, has furniſhed ſeveral Objections againſt Revelation, which in ſtead of the Diſcountenance of Power, require the beſt Attention of thoſe, who are moſt firmly perſwaded of its Truth and Advantage. But if the ſober Deiſts were diſpoſed to deal fairly with the Chriſtian Religion, they would give us their Scheme of Infidelity, as well as their Objections againſt the true Scheme of Revelation; that ſo we might take a comparative View of them, and ſhew the great Diſproportion both of Evidence and Objection againſt the one and the other.

Indeed it muſt be own'd, that the Deiſts have not been wholly wanting to our juſt Expectations in this Particular. They have at leaſt flung out a general Hypotheſis or two of Deiſm, how little ſoever they have ſupported them. They have firſt pretended, that thoſe

who

who have handed theſe ſuppoſed Revelations to us, were errant Cheats. This has been the more avowed Opinion of the Enemies of Revelation, till of late; when finding themſelves beat out of this Hypotheſis, by ſeeing that this would not agree with the Matter of Revelation, or with the cleareſt Hiſtory of thoſe who have deliver'd it; they have with more Subtilty betaken themſelves to another; pretending, that the Writers of the Books of the Old and New Teſtament were meer Enthuſiaſts, or Perſons who judg'd themſelves illuminated or inſpired without being ſo. Though it will be found, on a careful Conſideration of the Matter, that the Deiſts (whether they themſelves ſee it or no) play between theſe two Hypotheſes, ſhifting from one to the other, and blending them, inconſiſtent as they are, together.

It has been extreamly well obſerved, by a Writer of a fine Taſte in this Controverſy, that Enthuſiaſm never deals much in Facts: On which however all the Jewiſh *as well as the* Chriſtian *Revelation is wholly built. But let us try this Matter by another Touchſtone, which will better ſerve our preſent Purpoſe; for we are conſidering, whether the whole of Revelation be Enthuſiaſm, and not whether one or two great Branches of Revelation only be ſo or no. Now Enthuſiaſm, in the Nature of the Thing, can have no Unity. And let the*

Deiſts

Deiſts ſhew us in Fact, if they can, a Set of enthuſiaſtic Writers (who if they are at all intelligible) are at Unity with any conſiderable Number of their Predeceſſors, in former Ages; or ſo much as a ſingle Enthuſiaſt, that is conſiſtent with himſelf, through many Volumes, or even through one ſingle Volume, or it may be, one might ſay, a ſingle Page of their enthuſiaſtic Performances. If it ſhall appear then, that there is one worthy and noble Deſign purſued through the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, by one wiſe, plain and ſimple Mean, though they had Forty or more different Authors, and were not written in leſs than ſixteen Hundred Years; it will amount to the cleareſt Demonſtration, that the Bible cannot be the Work of Enthuſiaſts, writing in different Ages. And will not every one then ſee, that it muſt be from Him, who exiſts through all Ages, and ſees what is paſt, preſent, and to come: Who has always the ſame View, muſt have fix'd on the wiſeſt Methods to attain it, and yet muſt ſuit his Diſcoveries to the different Circumſtances of thoſe, to whom he makes them; if their Circumſtances vary from each other, as they muſt in a Tract of many Ages be ſuppos'd to do. If any one ſhould ſay, that the Writers of the Old and New Teſtament have thought of ſome Probabilities, and then couch'd them in dark, general and indeter-

minate

minate Expreſſions, capable of being differently accommodated and apply'd; and that ſucceeding Writers have conſulted the former, and endeavour'd to imitate them in ſuch dark, general and indeterminate Expreſſions, with an intent, not only that they might be differently accommodated and apply'd in future Times, but alſo that they might bear ſome Relation to former Books; I ſay, he that pretends to alledge this, entirely quits the Hypotheſis of Enthuſiaſm, in order to overthrow Revelation, and has recourſe to the exploded Hypotheſis of Impoſture. For repreſenting the Writers of the Old and New Teſtament to have acted as the Deiſts in this View ſuppoſe them to have done, is repreſenting them not as hot-headed, mad Enthuſiaſts, who, born away with their preſent Impulſe, never ſtop to conſider any Thing, (former Writings, or their own) but as the moſt cool-headed, deſigning Knaves.

The one Deſign I have mentioned, as running through the Bible, I take, with all other Writers on this Subject, to be the diſplaying the Glory of all God's Perfections, particularly his moral Perfections; or which will come to the ſame Thing, to aſſiſt our Reaſon in purſuing our own Happineſs, and promoting the Happineſs of others, as long as our Being laſts, and as long as we have other Beings about us. I take this Deſign to be

uniformly purſued by one wiſe, plain and ſimple Mean, Plot or Contrivance, calculated to ſtrike every Man, that has the Uſe of his Reaſon; though there are various Underplots, if I may be allow'd to uſe theſe Expreſſions, to ſupport the main One, ſuited to the Incidents of Mankind, and beautifully related and proportioned to each other: Which, as far as I know, has not been taken notice of. Now, if ſuch a Deſign, thus purſued, ſhall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, a Man may with infinitely greater Propriety, ſuppoſe the moſt perfect Drama (where the fineſt Deſign is carried on by the beſt choſen Plot, and by the moſt conſiſtent Underplots, and beautiful well proportion'd Incidents) to have been writ by a Number of the greateſt Madmen or Ideots, by Piecemeals, in different Ages; than to imagine a Thread of ſuch an End and Mean running through above forty Writers in more than ſixteen Hundred Years, to be the Work of ſo many Enthuſiaſts. Or we may as well ſuppoſe the World to be framed by meer Chance, or, which will ſtrike all but philoſophical Minds more, the moſt magnificent, beautiful and convenient Palace, that the Imagination can figure to it ſelf, to be built by Men unacquainted with all the Rules of Architecture, in ſeveral Ages, and without any Model to build by, and to be ſupported by meer Chance, through as many

more Ages, as to imagine ſuch an Unity of Deſign and Mean, as I have deſcribed, to be the Reſult of Enthuſiaſm and Accident mix'd together.

I have already hinted at ſome Conſiderations, that ſhew the Hypotheſis of Forgery, by which ſome Deiſts have endeavoured to account for Revelation to be a very abſurd one. But let us farther examine that Hypotheſis of Revelation by this Unity which I have juſt now obſerv'd to run through it. And here I would deſire the Deiſts to conſider, how hard and difficult it is to obſerve Unity in any Piece of meer Fiction, where the Writer aims at Unity with the cloſeſt Intention. This we may eaſily learn from the dramatic Writers of all Kinds, eſpecially if their Plot be all Fiction and not Story; who though they have this Unity ever in View, yet often depart from it: As we may eaſily ſee by reading them, or at leaſt by reading thoſe who give us their Criticiſms upon them. And let any one, who is uſed to Italian *or* Merchants *Accompts (as they are called) ſee whether they can ever depart in the leaſt from Truth in them, without feeling that Departure themſelves, or ſhewing it to others that narrowly inſpect them; though the Departure be not ſuch as vitiates the Accompt, or hinders the whole Ledger from being exactly ballanc'd at laſt; and where therefore of Conſequence the Accompt muſt be true.*

Now if it be ſo difficult to obſerve Unity in a Fiction or Falſhood, or where there is a great Degree of Fiction attending it, even in any ſingle dramatic Performance, though the Author applies himſelf to obſerve it never ſo carefully; and if it be ſo impoſſible to mix any, even the leaſt Falſhood, with the Truth of Accompts, without that Falſhood's appearing plainly, though it is not ſuch as deſtroys the Ballance of the Book, (ſo little will Truth and Falſhood ever agree) how can any one imagine the Books of the Old and New Teſtament to be Forgery, any more than Enthuſiaſm; when nothing but Unity and Agreement appears in ſuch a Number of Writers at ſo great diſtance of Time from each other? And that not only in the Main, but (when all juſt Allowances are made for Books circumſtanc'd as they are) even in the Detail of Particulars.

Thus, in my Opinion, it appears, that ſuch a Sketch as I have mentioned, is the beſt Way to explain Revelation, and to ſupport it, till a finiſh'd Piece of the ſame Deſign ſhall appear. And I wiſh, if any great Maſter ſhall go about it, he would particularly ſet the Proportions of Revelation in ſuch a Light, as that their Exactneſs, Beauty and Candor, might ſtrike every one that caſts his Eye on it. And

by the Proportions of Revelation, I mean not only thoſe Proportions, which appear in every Diſpenſation of God to Mankind, conſider'd apart, and by it ſelf; but in the ſeveral Diſpenſations, as they bear a Relation to each other. In order to explain my Meaning the better about theſe Proportions, I will give an Inſtance of ſome which are very conſiderable, in the Second Corollary, at the End of this Eſſay.

If this rough Draught of Revelation bring Men to lay aſide their Prejudices againſt it, and embrace it, at a Time when it undergoes ſo ſtrict a Diſquiſition, it will anſwer all I deſign by it, beſides the Inſtruction and Satisfaction of my own Mind.

I thought once to have delayed the Publication of the Eſſay, till I had finiſhed ſome Notes I have by me, the better to explain and ſupport ſeveral Aſſertions in it; and which, I believe, it will ſometimes be thought to want. I choſe to caſt what I chiefly deſign'd for that Purpoſe into Notes, where the Proof from Scripture would be conſequential and not direct, the better to preſerve the Thread of the Diſcourſe. But as I have not the Leiſure at preſent, that is neceſſary to finiſh them, I have reſolv'd to ſubmit this Eſſay without the Notes, to the View of the Public, in hopes that, as Things

Things ſtand, it may be of ſome Service to it.

I am very ſenſible that this is a Deſign of a great Compaſs and Difficulty. If any Expreſſion therefore has drop'd from me, through too cloſe an Attention to the Matter, and where I have not had the Aid of former Writers, that is leſs accurate or preciſe, I hope the Candor of the Reader will excuſe it; and make every proper and reaſonable Allowance, that may be due to an Undertaking of this Nature, or the frequent Interruptions of the Author.

There can be but little Uſe in knowing an Author's Reaſons for printing, at the Time he does, rather than at another. If the Performance be worth any Thing, it is never altogether out of Time; if it be worth nothing, it can never be in Seaſon. However, to ſatisfy the Curioſity of him that may ask the Queſtion, I will only ſay, that theſe Papers have lain by me a great many Months; in hopes I might ſee thoſe Thoughts in a better Dreſs from ſome abler Hand, now that Revelation is under ſo careful a Conſideration. Particularly I expected they might have been ſuperſeded by ſome Account I had of Doctor Burnet's Boyle's *Lectures. But being diſappointed not only by others, but by him in this Particular (though I am glad of an Opportunity of returning*

turning him my Thanks for ſo far exceeding our reaſonable Expectations in many others,) I reſolved to ſubmit this Eſſay to the Examination of the Friends of Truth, and of that free Enquiry, which is the only Way to attain Truth.

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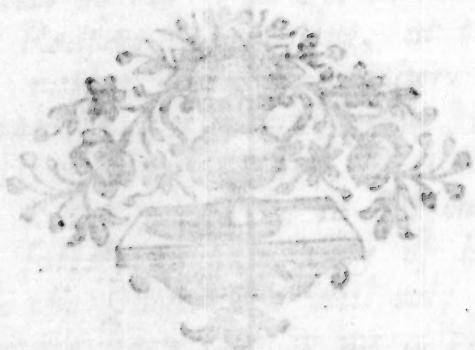

AN

ESSAY

On the ſeveral

DISPENSATIONS

OF

GOD to Mankind,

As they lye in the *Bible*.

IN Order to give a diſtinct Account of the various Methods, in which God has extraordinarily diſcovered himſelf to Mankind (which have been fitly enough called his Diſpenſations towards them) it will be neceſſary to trace them up to that, which is the firſt of them, and which naturally leads to all the reſt.

By the Methods in which God has extraordinarily diſcover'd himſelf to Mankind,

I mean thoſe Methods, by which he has conveyed farther Knowledge to them, than they could arrive at by the bare Uſe of the natural Powers he has given them. I call them extraordinary Diſcoveries, for want of a better Word to expreſs my Meaning: *Immediate*, which ſome have uſed, not being a proper Word to this Purpoſe. Since it reſtrains theſe Diſcoveries to thoſe, which have been immediately made by God, to the Perſon or Perſons to whom he made them; whereas I would take in ſuch Diſcoveries, as he has made by the Mediation of Angels, or of Prophets; or ſuch Diſcoveries as have been convey'd down to others, from thoſe to whom they have been either mediately or immediately made. All theſe extraordinary Diſcoveries go under the Name of Revelation; and by that Term I ſhall for the future generally expreſs them.

The firſt of theſe Diſpenſations, every one will preſently ſee muſt be the State in which God created our firſt Parents; and which is known by the Name of the State of Innocence, or of the State before the Fall.

And in this State it ſelf, it will be neceſſary to conſider what was previous to any Revelation from God to them; at leaſt, what was previous to any ſuch Revelation in the Order of Things (however it might be in the Order of Time) before we conſider ſuch Revelation.

For though it does not neceſſarily reſult from the Nature of God, or of Man, that God ſhould make extraordinary Diſcoveries of his Will to Mankind; yet it neceſſarily reſults from the Nature of both, that when God gave Man Underſtanding and Will, elective and active Powers, that he muſt make Man ſubject to a Law or Rule of his Choice and Conduct.

For whatever neceſſarily reſulted from the Frame of Nature, or from the Powers which God had given Man, and the Circumſtances, in which God had placed him, would be that Rule to him.

Thus the Law of Self-Government or Temperance would immediately appear to him: Becauſe an improper Indulgence of his Appetites and Paſſions (or Intemperance) would appear to be quite contrary to his Make and Frame; For his Make and Frame was to yield to his Appetites and Paſſions, where he ſaw that yielding to them was for his Preſervation, and the regular Propagation of the Species; not where they would be to his, or their Hurt, or Deſtruction.

Thus alſo, if he found himſelf ſurrounded with other Creatures, even that were of an Order below him, he muſt ſee, that if they were endued with Powers of feeling Pleaſure and Pain, he ought not to deprive them of Pleaſure, or inflict Pain, unneceſſarily. And if he was ſo happy as to find other Crea-

tures of the ſame Rank with himſelf, about him, he muſt ſee, that they having Rights as well as he, he ought not to infringe them. And that, as his own Happineſs or Miſery would be increaſed by theirs, he conſequently ow'd them a conſtant and perpetual good Will.

And when he once came to conſider, as he ſoon muſt, that there was a Being ſupremely Powerful, Wiſe and Good, to whom he and all other Beings ow'd their Exiſtence, he muſt immediately conſider Temperance and Benevolence, not only to be due to himſelf and others, as they flow from his own Frame, and the Circumſtances in which he was placed; but as what was thereby expreſs'd to be the Will of his Maker, who had given him that Frame, and placed him in thoſe Circumſtances: And therefore muſt conſider Temperance and Benevolence as due to himſelf and others, by Virtue of the Law of his Maker.

And he muſt then likewiſe preſently ſee, that the higheſt Veneration, Gratitude, Obedience, Submiſſion and Reſignation, were univerſally, conſtantly and perpetually to be paid to ſuch a Being, as long as his own Exiſtence continued.

Theſe Reflections therefore, either aroſe in the Minds of the firſt Man and Woman; or at leaſt, would have ariſen in their Minds on the leaſt Attention, if they were not anticipated

ticipated by Revelation. But as Revelation does not give us an Account of any ſuch Anticipation, it does not ſeem likely, that in Fact there was any ſuch Anticipation: Since God does nothing in vain in the Moral World, any more than in the Natural; and therefore is not likely to have revealed that to our firſt Parents, which they might eaſily have come to the Knowledge of, without any Revelation.

Whenever theſe Reflections aroſe in their Minds, it would alſo occur to them, that the Rule God had given them, as reſulting from his Will, who had given them ſuch a Frame, and placed them in ſuch Circumſtances, was ſo perfectly adjuſted to their Nature and Situation, that it was fit and beſt for them to regulate their Temper and Conduct by it, if it were but thereby to be as happy as the State they were placed in would allow, or as happy, as they could be in any given Circumſtances, as long as their Being continued; and that therefore, if they deviated from this Rule, they would loſe the Advantage that attended the obſerving it, and meet with ſome Inconveniencies that attended the departing from it; ſo that theſe Advantages and Inconveniencies may be conſidered as the natural Sanctions of the Law of Nature.

But beſides the Happineſs that would reſult from obſerving this Law, it was highly ſuitable and congruous, that a Being, that

that came perfect out of the Hands of God, ſhould be placed in additional Circumſtances of Dignity and Felicity. He had no other Father but God: He was created in his moral Image and Likeneſs: He was therefore his Son by Creation: And whilſt he preſerved his Duty and Obedience, it was fit he ſhould be placed in a State that became ſo high a Relation: Or more particularly, that he that reſembled him in moral, ſhould alſo reſemble him in ſome of his high natural Perfections, and in the Glory and Bliſs that reſults from them.

And ſo we find he did, from poſitive Expreſſions, or from plain Hints in *Moſes*'s Hiſtory. Particularly we find he was placed in a pleaſant Garden, free from Toil, Care and Vexation, with Dominion over the Works of God's Hands, and clothed with a Glory, (as a proper Badge of his high Relation to God, and of the Power and Dominion God had given him) and veſted with Immortality; as we ſhall ſee preſently: All this was conferred on him as an Inheritance, that was very ſuitable to an Earthly Son of God.

In this Senſe and Meaning is *Adam* called *the Son of God*, *Luke* iii. 38. and not barely as God created him, for ſo he did all Things; or, as he created him a living Soul, or a Being endued with rational Powers; for ſo he did all Men, bad as well as good; and would equally be the Father of the one, as well as the other.

God,

God, who had given our first Parents such additional Circumstances of Dignity and Felicity, can't be supposed to have been wanting in any Thing, that was necessary for their Subsistence and Comfort; and therefore as it might be very necessary to supply their want of Experience, with a Revelation about their Food, for their own Preservation; and about Marriage, for propagating the Species; we meet with an Account of the first, *Gen.* i. 29. ii. 9. and of the second *ch.* ii. 22, 23. 'Tis highly probable too, that they were endued with a Language at once, which could not have been formed by themselves in many Years; and without which, there could have been little Society between the first Pair, or between them and their Descendants.

However, though *Adam* was created a rational Being, and Innocent or Perfect, and placed in the happy, blissful and glorious Circumstances I have mentioned; yet he could not positively assure himself how long his Being, or these happy, blissful and glorious Circumstances would last; or that he should have any considerable Term in them granted to him. For Being it self, was what he had no Right to, nor the additional Degrees of Bliss and Glory, which attended it; nor had he any Right to the Continuance of either. Here therefore a farther Revelation was also most of all wanting, in order to his re-

receiving a proper Threatning and Promiſe, the moſt powerful Motives to Obedience: God was accordingly pleaſed to give it; and to let him know, that though his Life was but Terreſtial and Animal, and therefore Corruptible; yet it ſhould be continually reſtored and preſerved (together with the Dominion, Glory and Bliſs, which accompany'd it) if he continued perfectly dutiful and obedient, by *the Tree of Life*, which was one of the Trees of the Garden, that God had given him for Food: But that on the other Hand, he would certainly loſe all by yielding to his Appetites and Paſſions, inſtead of obeying the Law of God; and particularly if he ſhould but taſte of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, which may not be improperly called the Tree of Death.

There can be no manner of Doubt, but that our firſt Parents underſtood that the Tree of Life was of a ſanative and reſtorative Nature. But it was not poſſible for them to hope to be reſtored and preſerved by it, againſt Sin, as well as againſt natural Decays: They might therefore indeed expect, that it would preſerve them if they continued innocent; but that if they ſinned, either they, or the Tree, or its Vertue would be removed from one another: And there can't be much more Doubt made, but they underſtood, that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, was of a noxious and deadly Na-

ture which would diſorder their Blood, and make their Body the Seat of Diſtempers, and at laſt, of Death. But could they imagine, that that wou'd not be the Caſe, if they violated any other Precept God had given them, as well as this Prohibition? Could they be ſo ſtupid, as to think, that this additional Penalty, or one of equal Severity, would not attend the Breach of the Laws of their Nature, (over and above ſuch lower Penalties as would neceſſarily reſult from the Breach of thoſe Laws) as well as the high Penalty that was annex'd to the Breach of this revealed Prohibition? Would they not ſuppoſe, that a Being of impartial Juſtice, would certainly puniſh every Crime in Proportion to its Guilt? And that therefore if they violated any other Command that was of the like, or of greater Clearneſs and Importance, that he would puniſh it with the like, or with greater Severity? Life therefore could only be underſtood to attend perfect Vertue, and Death or ſome equal Puniſhment muſt have been underſtood to follow every equal Inſtance of Diſobedience and Vice. So that this Promiſe and Threatning, which was a Part of the Law of Food, muſt be conſider'd as reveal'd and additional Sanctions to the Law of Nature, and deſign'd as a farther and more powerful Enforcement of Obedience to it.

But notwithſtanding that *Adam* was thus a Son of God by Nature or by Creation, deriv'd from him ſo, as to have no other Father, reſembling him in his moral Perfections, and having an earthly Animal Dominion, Glory, Bliſs, and Immortality as his Inheritance, (the laſt of which was made known to him by Revelation, on Condition of his Obedience, with a Threatning of Death on Diſobedience) yet by criminally indulging his Appetites and Paſſions, in Compliance with the Temptation of the Devil, in eating the forbidden and noxious Fruit, inſtead of continuing the Son of God, or, in other Words, inſtead of continuing to be like God, and to obey him, and ſo to have any Right to this earthly Inheritance himſelf, or to tranſmit it to his Poſterity; he forfeited it, became a Child of the Devil, whom he imitated and obey'd; and brought a *Curſe* (the Portion of the Children of the Devil) upon himſelf, and on all his Deſcendants; *namely*, Toil, Care, Vexation, and at laſt Death, *Gen.* iii. 17, 20. For being no longer in the Image or Likeneſs of God himſelf, he begat not Men in that Image or Likeneſs, (or Sons of God, and Heirs of Life, Bliſs, Dominion, and Glory) but in his own *Likeneſs*, *after his Image*, Gen. v. 3. *Sons of Men*, as they are call'd, *Gen.* vi. 1. and *Heirs* of the Curſe. See a like Expreſſion, 1 *Sam.* xxviii.

xxviii. 19. As *Adam* and *Eve* were driven out of Paradiſe, were ſtript of their Glory, and the Dominion it was the Badge of, and became ſubject to ſtrong Appetites and Paſſions, to Inquietude, Toil, Care, Vexation, Diſeaſes, and Death; ſo all their Children were born out of Paradiſe, without any of the glorious and bliſsful Circumſtances that their Parents were at firſt inveſted with, and ſubject to all the unhappy Circumſtances, which they either felt in themſelves, or from Things about them.

As God had given the Hopes of an immortal Life and Happineſs to our firſt Parents on their Obedience, and threatned them with Death on their Diſobedience, in order to give them additional Motives to perſevere in their Duty, the Devil, that wicked and ſubtle Spirit, try'd to turn the Promiſe and Threatning to a quite contrary Purpoſe; and in all Probability, tempted them by repreſenting to them, that that State of *Happineſs*, tho' great and deſirable, and promis'd to be continued, yet was not promis'd, but on Condition of Obedience; and was therefore but precarious: That it depended not only on their Obedience, but on the perpetual Uſe of the Tree of Life; and that Death was threatned on Diſobedience, by which all would be irrecoverably loſt. That what was wanting therefore, to make them compleatly happy, was to know, how they might indefeaſibly poſſeſs the Good they en-

joy'd; and how they might certainly avoid the Evil, with which they were threatned. That eating the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, would furniſh them with that Knowledge, and that they would, upon taſting it, *become like Gods, knowing* the Means by which they might ſo aſſure themſelves of the Good they poſſeſs'd; as to be out of all Reach of the Evil with which they were threatned: The Way in which God himſelf that made them, and who had plac'd them in theſe bliſsful and glorious Circumſtances, poſſeſſes the one, and is ſecur'd againſt the other. When they firſt hearkned to this Propoſal, they fell; for here Luſt was fully conceiv'd: They no longer ſubmitted and reſigned themſelves to God's Diſpoſal, but preſumptuouſly affected a State infinitely ſuperior to that in which he had placed them; and inconſiſtent with it: Since that in which God had placed them was a State of Tryal. And having indulg'd their vain and high Ambition, they eaſily fell into a Compliance with the Means propos'd: The only Means that offer'd for gratifying it. And could then even ſuffer themſelves to be ſo far deluded (for Reaſon and Paſſion riſe and fall in Proportion to each other) as to eat of the Fruit; on being told, that God had not forbidden them that Tree; tho' they knew moſt aſſuredly, that God had not expreſsly forbidden them any Thing elſe. And moreover, ſeeing it *to be a Tree good for Food, and pleaſant to the Eye,*

Eye, as well as *a Tree to be deſir'd to make one wiſe*; *The Woman took of the Fruit, and did eat, and gave to her Husband, and he did eat*: Which being the Overt-Act of Diſobedience, *is* ſaid to be the firſt Tranſgreſſion; tho' it was but the Conſequence of that Luſt fully conceiv'd, which properly and ſtrictly was ſo.

No Doubt can be made, but that this vigilant and malicions Spirit, *who goes about as a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour*; and who was hardy enough to make ſeveral Attacks on the ſecond *Adam*, after the ſtrongeſt Repulſes; would ſoon have renew'd his Temptation to the firſt *Adam*, after this eaſy Victory. And nothing leſs was to be expected, than that after he had ſeduc'd him and his Wife to an Act of moſt preſumptuous Diſobedience, in order to gratify a low Appetite of their Body, and a high, tho' vain Ambition of their Mind, he would ſoon have fallen in with the Suſpicions and Diſtruſt of their guilty Thoughts, and have tempted them to deſpair of ever obtaining Mercy from their offended Maker: Thereby effectually to prevent all Attempts to return to their Duty.

In this deplorable Condition, God was pleas'd to give them ſome Hopes of his Mercy, in order to prevent the farther Attempts of the Devil, and the fatal Conſequences of their Deſpair; the common, tho' not the reaſonable

reaſonable or neceſſary Attendant of Guilt. The ſentencing the Serpent, the Author of all this Wickedneſs and Miſery, could not but give them ſome Hopes: The ſeeing, on their being ſentenc'd, that they ſhould not dye immediately, but ſhould be continued as the Parents of a future Race, could not but give them more: But what muſt needs give them the ſtrongeſt Hopes, was, a Promiſe, that ſome one or more of the Woman's Seed ſhould bruiſe this very *Serpent's Head* [THY HEAD, *Gen.* iii. 15.] *who had beguiled them.* That is, ſhould deſtroy the Power and Policy of this very Serpent, who had, by this Subtilty, brought all this Miſery upon them; and ſuch as ſhould deſcend from them. And God farther told them, that *he would put Enmity between the Seed* of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman.

But notwithſtanding this gracious Intimation, which was not only a Promiſe to deſtroy the Policy of the Serpent, but imply'd a Command to be more watchful againſt his Arts and Wiles, more vigorous in reſiſting all his Temptations, and to be at conſtant War and Enmity with all that ſhould afterwards become his Seed, (that is, ſhould imitate and obey him) yet *Cain*, the Firſt-born of human Race, inſtead of reſiſting him, preſently became a Lyar and a Murderer, as that wicked Spirit, his Father, was then begun to be:

And that notwithſtanding God's gracious Admonition and Caution to the contrary, *Gen.* v. 6, 7. Whereby *Cain* plainly rejected the Hopes this firſt Promiſe made to Mankind ſhould have kept alive in his Mind, and which ought to have animated his whole Conduct. He had therefore a peculiar Curſe inflicted on him, *Gen.* iv. 11, 12. And was, at the ſame time, driven out from *the Face of God:* Gen. iv. 14, 16. Or, the Place where God made glorious Manifeſtations of his Preſence and good Will, by the *Shechinah,* or Hoſt of Angels: Having, by the Contempt he expreſs'd of the firſt Promiſe, and of God's gracious Admonition to him, and the wicked Temper he perſiſted in, rendred himſelf utterly unworthy of any of his farther gracious Communications. On his Baniſhment from the Family and Preſence of God, he [*Cain*] became the Head of the *Family,* which the *Devil* ſet up in the World.

This Family came alſo under one Part of the Curſe of the Serpent, *viz.* That God *would put Enmity between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent.*

For God gave the Woman *another Seed,* even *Seth,* inſtead of righteous *Abel,* whom *Cain* ſlew, *Gen.* iv. 25.

The Family of this Patriarch, continued to be the *Family of God,* and was taken notice of as

as ſuch, when his Deſcendants became numerous; being *call'd by the Name of the Lord*, as the marginal Reading is, *Gen.* iv. 26. Or, *the Sons*, or Children *of God*, Gen. vi. 1. Not only as they paid that Obedience to the Law of their Nature, and to ſuch other Laws as were immediately reveal'd to them, as was due to the Law of a Being ſupremely powerful, wiſe, and good; who created and preſerved them, and was kind, tender, and indulgent towards them, and as they imitated him in Purity, Juſtice, and Mercy; but as they might form Inferences and Hopes, that ſince they obey'd him, and became like unto him, tho' they were not born to the Inheritance of a Son of God, *&c.* (a Right which *Adam* had forfeited for them, as well as for himſelf) yet God would not fail to *adopt* them to ſome ſutable Reward and Inheritance; tho' without knowing ſo fully what that Reward or Inheritance ſhould be. So that as God was the God and Father of *Adam* in Innocence, by Nature, or Creation; it was alſo expected, that he would by *Adoption* become the God and Father of every one after the Fall, who ſhould imitate and obey him. Whence it came to paſs, that God and Father, or Terms that imply them, as Sons or Children of God (in Oppoſition ſometimes to the Seed of the Serpent, and ſometimes to the Children of Men, who are Heirs of Death) are promiſcuouſly

promiſcuouſly us'd, even in this Part of ſacred Hiſtory, whilſt the Notions of divine Adoption were but faint and languid.

However to give them a more aſſured and lively Notion of it, God ſaw fit, after that *Enoch* had directed his Courſe of Life according to God's Will, thro' the Faith of a future Reward, (as the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* aſſures us, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6.) and had been a Prophet and Inſtructer of others, *Jude* 14. God ſaw fit, I ſay, *to take him*; to aſſure good Men of a future State of Reward and Happineſs in Soul and Body.

Such in the Family of *Seth* as acted up to the Law of their Nature, and to ſuch farther Rules as God had given to *Enoch*, or any Others, and by them to the reſt of Mankind, animated by the ſame Faith and Hope, *Believing that God was, and that he was a Rewarder of them that diligently ſought him; pleas'd him, and were accepted by him*, Heb. xi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 12.

For tho' theſe Diſcoveries being very general and indeterminate, the Reaſonings of their Faith could be but weak and doubtful too; yet their Faith bearing a Proportion to the Matter, and the Indiſtinctneſs of the Revelation, muſt be equally acceptable to God, as a Faith of greater Strength and Efficacy might render others, if it bore but the ſame Proportion to any clearer Diſcoveries he ſhould af-

terwards vouchſafe them. And if the Vertue of theſe early Patriarchs, tho' animated by fainter Hopes of a future Reward, was equal to a Vertue animated by a ſtronger, in after-times; in that Caſe, their Vertue muſt be more (not leſs) acceptable to God, than that of the later Patriarchs, of *Jews*, or of *Chriſtians*, in the other Caſe.

About the Time of *Noah*, theſe two Families, *viz.* of God and of the Devil, which were to be at perpetual Enmity, and were ſeparated from each other by God's expreſs Order, (*Gen.* iii. 15.) as well as by the Interpoſition of his Providence, (*Gen.* iv. 11, 12, 14, 16.) yet mingled again: Appetite prevailing againſt the Appointment of God. *For when theſe Sons of God ſaw the Daughters of Men that they were fair, they took them Wives, of all which they choſe*, Gen. vi. 2.

From theſe Inter-marriages which God had forbid, Corruption and Violence ſpread over the Face of the whole Earth. And what leſs was to be expected from Inter-marriages ariſing from the Heat of Luſt, which had overcome the Fear of God, and all Regards to his Promiſes and Commands; but a Gigantick Race; Men of uncommon Size and Strength, uncultivated by the Principles of Reaſon and Revelation, by which alone the Appetites and Paſſions of Health and Vigour are to be controul'd. So that *Noah*, who, perhaps, was the only Perſon that had kept free from

from this unhappy Mixture, and the more unhappy Attendants and Conſequences of it, was the *only righteous or ſincere Perſon*, Gen. vi. 1. Whereupon God reſolv'd to ſweep away this impious Race of Men with a Flood, and to cleanſe the Earth from their Corruption and Violence; preſerving none but *Noah* and his Family alive: By whom, as the pure Race of *Seth*, he would people a new World.

For the ſake of the ſingular Piety of this good Man, God ſeems to have bleſſed Mankind immediately after the Flood, ſo far as to have remov'd part of the Curſe, by taking off the great Perverſneſs of the Seaſons, and the Sterility of the Ground; by making Mankind more fruitful than their Anti-deluvian Anceſtors; and by reſtoring them to a greater Degree of Dominion over the brute Part of the Creation, than they had had ſince the Fall. All which was confirm'd by a Covenant, that *he would not renew his Curſe on the Earth any more, either* by the Inclemency of the Heavens, by the Barrenneſs of the Earth, or by the total Deſtruction of it; and alſo by a Covenant with every living Creature; that in Compenſation to them, for being in this greater Degree of Subjection to Mankind, *he would not deſtroy them or the Earth any more.* See *Gen.* xii. 8. xxi. 17——20. Compar'd with *Chap.* v. 29. viii. 20, 21, 22. ix. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9 — 18. See Dr. *Sherlock's more ſure Word of Prophecy*, pag. 87——119.

This Covenant was in it ſelf a great Bleſſing; but yet might be underſtood to be a much greater, as it might be apprehended to be a Pledge of a very ſuperior Covenant, that God deſigned in a few Ages after to make with Mankind; when he ſhould expreſly promiſe to recover good Men from Death, the far more bitter Part of the Curſe that ſtill remain'd behind, and expreſsly entitle them to eternal Life.

This ſeems to have been intimated by *Noah*, in what he ſays prophetically of *Shem*: Promiſing a farther and peculiar Bleſſing, when he *bleſſes the Lord God of Shem*, Gen. ix. 26. God's being the Lord God of *Shem*, muſt denote a farther Bleſſing than any that had been granted by God to *Noah* and his Sons in general, or to *Japheth* in particular, the Eldeſt of them. For being the God of *Shem*, is being the Father of *Shem*. And the Inheritance that God, conſider'd as a Father, is ever ſaid in Scripture to give to any of his Sons, is Life; unleſs it be when it relates to the Adoption of *Abraham* and his Poſterity to ſome earthly Inheritance; to which they had no Right by Birth or Acquiſition, or any other way than by divine Donation.

On the other hand, the unbelieving and diſobedient Part of the Family of *Noah*, which

which was *Ham* and his Deſcendants, particularly *Canaan* ſeems to have renounc'd their Share in the Bleſſings that belong'd to the Children of God, and to have become *the Family of the Devil*; and accordingly to have been mark'd out as ſuch by the Curſe of God in many remarkable Inſtances, as had been the Caſe of *Cain* before the Flood, *Gen.* iv. 11 — 22. Theſe Inſtances of God's ſevere Vengeance were ſometimes neceſſary to prevent ſuch unhappy Mixtures between theſe two Families, as had brought on the Flood; and were, in their natural Tendency, Motives to Repentance. And if they had not that Effect, yet muſt have render'd the Juſtice of God in any future Puniſhment the more conſpicuous; and at the ſame time have confirm'd the Children and Family of God in their Faith and Obedience. Under this Head, to ſpeak of them once for all, may be rank'd the Confuſion and Diſperſion of *Babel*, the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, the Plagues of *Egypt*, the Extirpation of the *ſeven Nations*, &c.

Notwithſtanding this univerſal Deſolation by the Flood, in nine Generations, the Knowledge and Worſhip of the one only true God, and all Vertue, had in a manner forſaken the Earth: And the World apoſtatizing from their Maker, became Worſhipers of falſe Gods. As the Worſhip that had been paid to the true God, was paid to him very much under the

the Notion of a Father; it ſeems highly probable to me, that the firſt Worſhip of the Devil might be introduc'd under the ſame; ſince falſe Religion, eſpecially at the firſt, would certainly have a near Semblance of the true: And it has been an antient and common Obſervation, that the Devil affects to ape God. The *Phallagogia*, an Idolatry thought by many learned Men to be extremely antient, gives great Countenance to this Opinion: Eſpecially if *Spencer*'s Notion be juſt, (which ſeems highly probable) that Circumciſion was appointed, among other Reaſons, to obviate this Idolatry. See *Spencer De Leg. Hebr. Rit.* lib. 1. cap. 4. ſect. 3. But whether this particular Notion be juſt or no, yet it is certain, that Idolatry was ſo general, that even the Family of bleſſed *Shem* was not entirely free from a lower kind of it; they worſhiping Images or *Terraphim*, together with the true God, *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. However,

God *wink'd at this, ſuffering their Manners*, without ſending any Meſſenger to reclaim them.

But, ſoon after this Idolatry began, God call'd *Abraham* out of *Urr of the Chaldees*, chooſing him (who probably was the only Perſon that had kept himſelf free from it, *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. *Nehem.* ix. 7, 8. *Joſeph. Antiq.* lib. 1.) as the Head of a Family, in which he would preſerve the true Religion, *Gen.* xviii.

xviii. 19. (conſiſting in a Belief of and in Obedience and Submiſſion to the one true God) And by the Means of whoſe Travels, diſtinguiſh'd Protection and Vouchſafements, he would give ſuch as were well diſpos'd in *Canaan* and *Egypt*, &c. [*Gen.* xii. 17, 19. xiv. 18—21. xxi. 18. xxv. 3—7. xxvi. 6—34.] and elſewhere, an Opportunity to enquire after him.

In regard of *Abraham's* ſingular and unexampled Faith and Obedience on the greateſt Tryals, God was pleas'd to become his *God, or his Father.* See *Gen.* xvii. 7. xxxi. 42. *Exod.* iii. 6. and many other Places. For, as has been obſerv'd already, God and Father are Terms that are often us'd promiſcuouſly in Scripture. God alſo promis'd to *bleſs him.* This Bleſſing ſeems to be the recovering him from Death, the remaining Part of the original Curſe which had not yet been expreſsly taken off to *Noah:* And by this, *Noah's* bleſſing the *Lord God of Shem*, the Anceſtor of *Abraham*, was explain'd; and that the Lord was the God or Father of *Shem*, was fully confirm'd, *Gen.* xii. 23. See *Gen.* xxii. 17, 18. For God now *expreſsly adopted Abraham, Shem's* Deſcendant, to the Inheritance of eternal Life: And alſo all the Families of the Earth that ſhould become his ſpiritual Seed; *i. e.* Should imitate him in his Faith and Obedience, *Rom.* iv. 12, 16. *Gal.* iii. 9, 29. Or in

other Words of Scripture, that *ſhould be perfect before God* as he was: That is, ſhould live in a ſteady Courſe of ſincere Obedience, Submiſſion to God's Providence, and Reſignation to his future Diſpoſal, from a firm Belief of his Protection, Support, and future Reward. For this Bleſſing was not to be confin'd to ſuch only as ſhould imitate him among the Race of *Shem*; but to be expreſsly extended to any among the other Families of the Earth, even the moſt accurſed, that ſhould follow his Example. However, *Abraham* was to have this ſingular Honour, that of whatever Family of the Earth, they were, that ſhould imitate him, they ſhould not receive their Title to this Inheritance immediately from God, as he did; but as the *Children of Abraham*, or thro' *Abraham*, *who was the Father of us all*, Rom. iv. 17. (whether *Shemmite* or *Canaanite*, *Jew* or *Gentile*, *Male* or *Female*, *Bond* or *Free*) *As it is written, a Father of many Nations have I made thee, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickneth the Dead, and calleth thoſe Things which be not, as tho' they were.* And to give *Abraham*, not only the Promiſe of this Inheritance, but alſo a Promiſe of a Pledge of it, God likewiſe promis'd to adopt his natural Seed to an earthly Inheritance, and part of them to the Inheritance of *Canaan*, (the Delight of all Lands) who had no other Right to it, *Exod.* xiii. 5. God was pleas'd

to

to repeat theſe Promiſes to him, on great Occaſions, for the Confirmation of his Faith, *Gen.* xiii. 14, 18. x. 5. xvii. 21. And to make them ſtill clearer in Proportion to his Faith's growing ſtronger. And in order ſtill farther to encourage and ſtrengthen his Faith and Truſt in God, God was pleaſed to appoint Circumciſion, as the Seal of theſe Covenants or Promiſes: (*Gen.* xvii. 1 — 15. *Rom.* ix. 4. *Heb.* xi. 13.) Or in other Words, as a farther Aſſurance of this Adoption to an earthly as well as to an heavenly Inheritance. And therefore Circumciſion was enjoyned to none, but ſuch as were entitled to both theſe Inheritances. So that, I think, Circumciſion ſhould be conſidered as the Badge of God's viſible Family, or of God's Sons by a double Adoption, and of them only.

That *Abraham* might have the more ſtrong Conſolation in the lively Hopes of this double Inheritance (and of one of them, *viz.* the earthly, as a Pledge of the other, *viz.* the heavenly) God was pleaſed at laſt in infinite Condeſcenſion to confirm them by an Oath, *Gen.* xxii. 16. And to the intent that the Vigor of theſe Hopes might be the better preſerved, on which their Performance of the Condition ſo much depended, and conſequently the Performance of the Promiſe on God's Part, God ſaw fit to repeat theſe Promiſes (which he had ſo ſolemnly confirmed to *Abraham*) to *Iſaac* and to *Jacob* afterwards,

(*Gen.* xxvi. 34. xxvii, 29. xxviii. 4, 13, 14.) Heirs together with him of the ſame Promiſe, *Heb.* xi. 9.

Abraham, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and their Deſcendants, being the firſt Family of all the Families of the Earth, that received any expreſs Promiſe, that God would be *their God, and bleſs them*; or in other Words, that he would be their Father, and that they ſhould be his Children; *Theirs was the Adoption, the Promiſes, and the Covenants, and the Inheritances*, Rom. x. 4. Heb. xi. 8, 13. Hence it is, that God calls *Iſrael* or the Children of *Iſrael* (the Deſcendants of *Abraham*) his Son and his Firſt-born, *Exod.* iv. 22. *Iſrael* and his Sons being adopted to *Canaan*, the Inheritance of the Firſt-born, whilſt *Iſhmael* had only *Idumea*, and *Eſau* only Mount *Seir* for a Poſſeſſion, *Deut.* xi. 5.

And hence it is that God is alſo the Father of all *Abraham*'s ſpiritual Seed: *The Seed*, or People, *that was to be born*; or *the Seed that was to ſerve him, and* that was *to be accounted to him for a Generation*, Pſal. xxii. 30, 31. God having adopted them from being the Children of Men, and of the Devil, Heirs of the firſt and ſecond Death (which laſt is called Wrath) to an heavenly Inheritance, by his Free Grace, in *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord.

But farther, the Bleſſing promiſed to *Abraham*, the Father of all the Faithful, and to his faithful or ſpiritual Seed, was not a bare Deli-

Deliverance from all the Curſes that *Adam* brought on his Seed, or that which they unhappily acquir'd by becoming the Seed of the Serpent (as has already been ſhown) but the aſſuring him of a ſuperior Bleſſing to that which *Adam* had forfeited: Or the aſſuring him of the Inheritance of an adopted Son of God, *viz.* a Reſurrection to an heavenly Dominion, Glory, Bliſs, and Immortality, as we learn from our Saviour's Argument againſt the *Sadducees*, *Luke* xx. 37. and from St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, Chap. iii. 14. under the Terms of *the Bleſſing of the Spirit*: The Spirit being to quicken or raiſe us up, and being in the mean time the Earneſt of this Adoption, that is the Redemption of our Bodies from the Bondage of Corruption, *Rom.* iii. 21. and the Inheritance which is to follow it.

And from the New Teſtament, where this Matter is more fully explained, we learn, that when this Redemption ſhall be effected by the Spirit, then inſtead of an animal, earthly Body, cloathed with a Glory derived from the firſt *Adam* (who was but a living Soul, 1 *Cor.* xv. 45.) in which we might have enjoyed an earthly Paradiſe, or a ſolitary Garden, that we were to have dreſſed, and where we ſhould have had Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, the Fowls of the Air, and over every living Thing that moveth on the Earth, and ſubdued them; *Gen.* i. 28. ii. 15. and where we might have ſometimes convers'd with animal Men,

like our ſelves, and now and then have ſeen the Glory of God, and heard his Voice, as *Adam* did in the Cool of the Day, *Gen.* iii. 8. (which, as we have before obſerv'd, was the Inheritance with which he was veſted ſoon after his Creation;) We may have a glorious, celeſtial, incorruptible Body, ſhining like the Sun in the Firmament, deriv'd from the ſecond *Adam*, who is a *quickning Spirit* (1 Cor. xv. 45.) and reſembling his glorious Body; in which we ſhall inhabit the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where there ſhall be *no more Curſe, nor no more Night*, Rev. xxii. 3, 5. but where *we ſhall be Kings* and Prieſts *unto God*, and *have Dominion over the Wicked*, Pſal. xlix. or as St. *Paul* ſays, *judge Angels and the World*, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. And at full Reſt and Leiſure, and without any Interruption, enjoy the bleſſed Society of the Aſſembly of the Firſt-born, whoſe Names are written in Heaven, and of an innumerable Company of *Angels*; and where after we have been introduced by *Jeſus* the Mediator of the better Covenant, to God the Judge of all, *we ſhall be ever with the Lord, and ſee him as he is.*

Abraham being the firſt, to whom this Bleſſing was expreſly promiſed after the Curſe that had been pronounced on the Fall; Bleſſing and Curſing are afterwards often uſed in Scripture as Terms equal to Life and Happineſs, and to Miſery and Death. (See *Deut.* xxvii. 14, 26. and xxviii. 2——14. *Matth.*

xxv.

xxv. 34. *Rom.* iv. 9. *Gal.* iii. 8, 9, 10, 13, 14.) And it may be always ſignify this in part, if not in whole.

This Bleſſing is expreſſed in other Words of Scripture, as *forgiving*, or *not imputing Sin*, Rom. iv. 7, 8. And *juſtifying*, *imputing or counting for Righteouſneſs*, Rom. iv. 3. *Gal.* iii. 8. The reaſon of which Expreſſions is plain, ſince whoſoever is *Rectus in Curia* is intitled to all the Privileges and Bleſſings that belong to the Juriſdiction of that Court; or rather to all the Privileges and Bleſſings which belong to the Subjects of that Kingdom, which erects or conſtitutes that Court.

After the Fall God had hitherto only manifeſted his Glory and Will to particular Families, *Seth*'s, *Noah*'s; and at laſt to *Abraham*'s, *Iſaac*'s, and *Jacob*'s, by an expreſs Covenant of Adoption confirm'd by a Seal, a promis'd Pledge and an Oath. But the Family of *Jacob* multiplying exceedingly, till it came from ſeventy Souls, which went down into *Egypt*, (Gen. xlvii. 27.) to be about ſix hundred thouſand Men, beſides Children, or Male-children, (*Exod.* xii. 37.) and God remembring his Covenant, or his temporal Covenant, or the temporal part of his Covenant made with their Forefathers *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and their natural Seed, that he would give them the Land of *Canaan*, the promis'd Pledge of

of the Performance of the better Promiſe, (*Exod* ii. 24. and iii. 8.) He now reſolved to give them the actual Poſſeſſion of the Earneſt of it, and to take this Family, People, Nation, and Kingdom, to himſelf; and conſequently that he would become their King, and their God. And ſending a Meſſage to them by *Moſes*, that he would deliver them from the Bondage of the *Egyptians*, and reſolving alſo very ſoon to propoſe to them to become his People, he then firſt calls them *his People* in ſpeaking to *Moſes*; Exod. iii. 17. and afterwards in Meſſages, which he ſent by *Moſes* to *Pharaoh* about them, *Exod.* v. 1. and vi. 7. The better to prepare them for ſuch a Kingdom, God had ſuffer'd them to groan under a long and cruel Oppreſſion in *Egypt*; and in order to fix their Attention, and likewiſe draw the Attention of Mankind to Himſelf through them, he was pleas'd to deliver them from their Oppreſſion, in a Manner that muſt make the greateſt Noiſe in the World.

Perhaps God ſaw it the more fit to erect this Family into a Kingdom under Himſelf at this Period of Time, to prevent their worſhiping the Devil, as *Baal* or *Lord*; that is, as the Lord or God of the Country which they were going to inhabit: Which about this Time was the Notion under which Worſhip was paid him by all the People in their Neighbourhood. See *Spencer de Theocr. Judaic.* Mankind ha-

having now ſtill farther apoſtatiz'd from the true God, and ſunk deeper into the Worſhip of the Devil, as their Father and Lord, (though he was the grand and avowed Enemy of God, and of Mankind) and practiſing all ſorts of Impiety and Wickedneſs in honour to him: Such indeed as were intirely ſuited to their own dark Minds, to the Prince of Darkneſs, and to the Empire he had uſurped over them.

The better to obviate this Miſchief, as well as for other wiſe Reaſons, God was pleaſed fifty Days after their going out of *Egypt*, actually to erect them into a Kingdom under Himſelf, as their King and their God, by the Covenant in the *Wilderneſs* at Mount *Sinai*: Namely, that as he had delivered them out of the Land of *Egypt*, and out of the Houſe of Bondage, he would take them for a People, and they ſhould take the Lord for their God, and ſhould obey him. *Exod.* xix. 4, 9. and xx. 2, 19. *Deut.* i. 17. and xxvi. 17, 18. *Joſhua* xxiv. 22. *Hoſea* xiii. 10. *Exod.* xxiv. 3, 12.

The *Circumſtances* which attended the entring into this Covenant were highly ſuitable to that Tranſaction. The Time of erecting this Kingdom, was when they could not but have very awful and grateful Thoughts of God; in a Place retir'd from all Mankind, who were Idolaters, and conſequently from all Solicitations to any of their idolatrous Practices, and in ſo awful a Manner as was calculated to ſtrike them and their Poſterity with the moſt tremendous

mendous Impreſſions of the Authority of the Lawgiver: All which would be little enough to preſerve ſuch a wayward and untractable People from the Superſtitions of their Neighbours.

To theſe, ſuch of any other Family as by the Conſideration of God's amazing Providences towards the *Iſraelitiſh* Family and Nation, ſhould be brought to acknowledge the God of *Iſrael* for the only true God, and would ſubmit to the Laws of this Kingdom which he had erected, were joyn'd: And a general Naturalization of all ſuch became a ſtanding Law of their State. And as Circumciſion had been the Badge of God's Family, ſo now it was made the Badge of all his male Subjects (*John* vii. 32.) who were to be the Inheritors of the Land of *Canaan*.

As this Kingdom was, among other Purpoſes, deſign'd as a Reward for the Piety of *Abraham*, and as a Reward for his Deſcendants, who though far from being all perſonally pious, yet were the only Family that worſhip'd the true God, or own'd the Rule of Virtue; God ſaw fit to bleſs them at once, and before-hand with the Riches of *Egypt*, as had been foretold to *Abraham*, Gen. xv. 14. (which they ſeem to have demanded as due for their hard Labour, *Exod.* ii. 35, 36. and which the *Egyptians* willingly gave them to get rid of them) and with a great and remarkable Overthrow of that People at the *Red Sea*:

When after the moſt cruel Oppreſſion, and contrary to the moſt expreſs Agreement, they came to hinder them from going into the *Wilderneſs* to ſacrifice, as God had commanded them. They were likewiſe to have had an immediate Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, (*a Land which he had eſpied for them*; Ezek. xx. 6. *A Land flowing with Milk and Honey*) and had a free Government eſtabliſhed over them, (See *Harrington's Art of Lawgiving*, Book II. *And the Prerogative of Popular Government*, Book II. c. 3.) that excelled all others, not only in the peculiar Honour and Advantage of having God for their King, but (as might naturally thence be expected) in the moſt excellent Laws and Conſtitutions; till they by their incurable proneneſs to Idolatry and Vice oblig'd him, as a wiſe and gracious Governor, to defer their going into *Canaan* for ſome Years, and to propoſe Laws to them that were not good in themſelves, but which were neceſſary from their wicked Temper and Diſpoſition, as Remedies to prevent greater Evils, and even their utter Extirpation, long before it overtook them. See *Ezek.* xx. 4—27. Nor would their Wickedneſs ſuffer God to ſtop here, but at laſt, in juſt Puniſhment of their Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs, forc'd him to withdraw more and more from the Exerciſe of his Regal Authority over them; and at their fooliſh and perverſe Deſire, to commit it to ſuch, as uſed

them with a Harſhneſs and Severity that was but too like the Kings of all the Nations round about them. Thus however, by the Covenant at *Sinai*, the *Iſraelites* became God's People: Or a People that he had ſeparated to himſelf from all the People of the Earth, who were Children and Subjects of the Devil, and to ſuch a Degree, as to make the higheſt Acts of Wickedneſs the higheſt Acts of their Devotion to him, or to other Idols by his Suggeſtion. On this Account the *Iſraelites* are called *an holy People or Nation to the Lord*, Exod. xix. 6. Deut. vii. 6. and xiv. 2. and xxvi. 19.

It may be of uſe on this Occaſion to ſtop a Moment, to recollect, that thoſe, who by the Covenant at *Sinai* were become his People, were already *his Sons*, or Children, or Firſtborn, and that he had been their *Father* by expreſs Covenant from the Time of *Abraham*, as he was now to be their King: And to obſerve, that from hence it is that *Children* and *People*, are in effect the ſame thing, and promiſcuouſly uſed in Scripture. *Exod.* vi. 7. and x. 3. and xix. 5, 6. and xxxi. 9. and *Hoſea* i. 10. *Rom.* ix. 26. *Gal.* iii. 26.

This may account for what might otherwiſe appear ſomewhat ſtrange in the ſacred Writers. And after this, the Terms of God and Father, or Terms which imply them, are ſtill uſed promiſcuouſly with greater Frequency in the old Teſtament.

Thus

Thus God erected [the Family, or] the Children of *Iſrael* into a Kingdom: But it was but a temporal or an *earthly Kingdom*, though under himſelf, who was an heavenly King: In which he always acted ſuitably to that high Character, whilſt he condeſcended ſo far as to become their earthly or temporal Prince. And though this Kingdom, which he adminiſter'd, was but an earthly Kingdom, yet if they would but have obſerv'd its Laws, without the leaſt Breach of any one of them, they would have obtained Life by the Works of this Law. *Ezek.* xx. 10——27. *Deut.* vi 25. *Gal.* iii. 10. *Rom.* iv. 4. and iii. 27. (That is, as I apprehend, an animal or terreſtrial Life.) For as God took them for his People, it was but fitting that he ſhould give them a ſpiritual and a perfect Law. See *Pſal.* xix. 7. *Mat.* xxii. 36. *Rom.* vii. 12. And a perfect Law perfectly obey'd muſt entitle all that ſo obey it to Happineſs and Life. On the other hand, as God was the ſupreme Magiſtrate in this Kingdom, ſo he could puniſh the Breach of ſuch Laws as were ſpiritual. For though he ordinarily left the *Iſraelites* to be proceeded againſt by the inferior Magiſtrates, by *Plea* or *Controverſy*, or *ſecundum acta & probata*, yet he ſeems to have inflicted Puniſhments in ſome caſes immediately himſelf, which I take it are pointed out by ſuch a Phraſe as this, *The Lord will ſet his Face againſt that Man*, Lev. xvii. 10. Inſtances to this pur-

poſe may be ſeen, *Exod.* xxxiii. 35. *Lev.* x. 9. *Numb.* xii. 10. xvi. 31, 32. 2 *Sam.* vi. 7. 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 18.

But notwithſtanding the *Iſraelites* had ſuch Promiſes and Threatnings, yet Men being very frail, from the Strength of their Appetites and Paſſions, and the numerous Objects that ſurround them, and that perpetually ſolicit and provoke them; and the Law being alſo weak, or inſufficient to aſſiſt their Reaſon in the Purſuit of Vertue, by not promiſing the Forgiveneſs of Sins that were paſt, or of future Tranſgreſſions; but inſtead of any ſuch Promiſes, denouncing Death for each of them (For *curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Law to do them*: Deut. xxviii. 26. *Gal.* iii. 10.) And being alſo weak, by not propoſing a ſufficient Reward, or a Reward that was attainable; the Law, notwithſtanding that Part of it was ſpiritual and perfect, and could have given Life to any, who could have obſerv'd it exactly, (*Lev.* xviii. 5. *Matt.* xxii. 36. *Rom.* iii. 27. iv. 4. vii. 12, 14.) became only the Law or Inſtrument of an imperfect Conſtitution thorough its Rigor as a ſpiritual Rule, and thorough the Weakneſs of this Conſtitution, (of which it was the Law or Inſtrument) on account of its being without a ſufficient or an attainable Reward.

And though Part of this Law was ſpiritual, and regarded the very Motions of the Mind,

yet

yet the far greater Part of it was carnal: Indeed all the Law was ſo, that could be exactly obey'd. This we learn from an expreſs Aſſertion, *Heb.* ix. 10. And from being told, *That it purify'd nothing but the Fleſh: But could not purge the Conſcience*, Heb. ix. 13, 14. (to which *it was altogether unprofitable*, Heb. vii. 18.) Nor *make the Comers thereunto perfect.*

From both theſe Conſiderations it appears how this Law became *deadly*, as St. *Paul* aſſerts, *Rom.* vii. 10. The Rigor of that Part of the Law that was ſpiritual, requiring Perfection on pain of Death, made that Part of it deadly; it being impracticable; and the Penalty of every Diſobedience to this part of the Law being Death, and the great Number of Precepts that were carnal, made thoſe who were ſubject to them alſo often liable to Death. Beſides, the Law was Death or deadly, becauſe it could not give Life: As thoſe Precepts could not in their own Nature which were carnal: No more than thoſe, which though in their own Nature perfect, yet through the Weakneſs of Mankind, and the Defects of the Conſtitution of that Kingdom (allowing no Forgiveneſs, Relaxation or Abatement, and not propoſing a ſufficient or an attainable Reward) could not be perfectly obey'd.

This Law, which was partly carnal, and all of it deadly, God gave the *Iſraelites*, to let them ſee, that as this was not the Law of

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a perfect Conſtitution, the Conſtitution it ſelf was not deſign'd to be perpetual: And even to ſhew them at laſt, that it was intended to lead them to *a better Hope*, viz. The *Law of the Spirit of Life*: Or, *The Law of that Kingdom which cannot be ſhaken*: Or, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it under other Images; God gave them this Law *to be a School-maſter to bring them to Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 24. And thus Chriſt, or the Chriſtian Religion may be ſaid to be the *End of the Law*, or to be *propheſy'd of by it*, or *contained in it*, juſt as Equity is ſaid by our Saviour *to be the Law and the Prophets*, Mat. vii. 12.

As *Moſes* was God's chief Miniſter in erecting this earthly Kingdom; ſo *Joſhua*, the *Judges*, *Kings* and *Prophets*, were his chief Miniſters in preſerving and continuing it. *Joſhua* and the ſucceeding *Judges* were rais'd up by God, to introduce the *Iſraelites* into *Canaan*, or to preſerve the Poſſeſſion of it to them, on ſeveral extraordinary Emergencies.

The People at laſt growing weary of theſe uncertain and occaſional Governors, and of the Form of Government that prevail'd under them, and affecting to be like their Neighbours, deſir'd a King: Though they thereby *rejected God from ruling over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. God gave them *Saul* in his Anger, and took him away in his Wrath. The People might

might well be afraid, leaſt *David*, whom God had anointed in *Saul's* ſtead, might have no Line, any more than *Saul*; and might be apprehenſive of the Effects of ſuch an unſettled State, introduc'd by their own Folly and Wickedneſs, in asking a King. They might well fear, leſt the Government ſhould be quite unhing'd; and leſt *Canaan* it ſelf, the Pledge of a better Inheritance, ſhould be intirely loſt: And which now, beſides, too like other Pledges, when the Thing of which they are the Earneſt is unſeen or delay'd, had loſt a great deal of its Force. To prevent the ill Conſequences which might have enſu'd from any Uncertainty in this Matter, and to give a new Spring to their Hopes, the Continuance of the Kingdom under *David* and his Line, ſeems to have been made a Pledge of the future Kingdom, of the future Son of *David*, ſpoken of *Pſal.* ii. 7. lxxxix. 19, 20. (who is alſo call'd *David*, Jer. xxx. 9. Hoſ. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxvi. 24, 25. from the moſt exact Reſemblance and Analogy between *David* and him) and conſequently of the Righteouſneſs of that Kingdom, and of Life as the Reward of that Righteouſneſs. God gives therefore a Promiſe of this Pledge, and of the Thing pledg'd by it, and confirms them by an Oath. The Promiſe of the Pledge indeed was conditional, as may be ſeen 2 *Sam.* vii. 14. xxiii. 5. 1 *Kings* ii. 4. viii. 25. But the Promiſe or Covenant of the Thing pledg'd, was

abſolute, as may be ſeen 2 *Sam.* vii. 16, 26, 27. 1 *Chron.* xvii. 14, 23, 24, 27. *Acts* ii. 25—37. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 26—39. *Iſaiah* lv. 3, 4. *Acts* xiii. 34—38. *Jer.* xxxiii. 17, 21, 26. The abſolute and conditional Promiſe may be ſeen together, *Pſal.* cxxxii. 11, 12. where likewiſe the abſolute Promiſe, if not the conditional, is confirm'd by the Oath of God: As it alſo is, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 35. What has been ſaid of this Covenant with *David*, may ſerve to ſhew us, why the *new Teſtament* Writers lay ſo much ſtreſs on Chriſt's being *a Son of David*, or of the *Houſe and Lineage of David*; (in too many Places to be quoted) of his being to have the *Throne and Kingdom of his Father David*, and of his being *to reign over the Houſe of* Jacob, *and that for ever*, Matt. i. 20. Luke i. 32, 33. Acts xiii. 23. Mark x. 47. And this may alſo ſerve to ſhew us, why the Apoſtles, on Chriſt's Aſcenſion, ſay that he was then actually rais'd to *David's Throne*, Acts ii. 30, 36 xv. 16.

But as on the Kingdom's becoming Hereditary, God ſeems to have withdrawn more from the Exerciſe of his regal Authority, and the Anſwers by *Urim* and *Thummim* ceas'd; (See *Spencer de Leg. Hebr. Rit.* Lib. III. cap. 7.) And as from the Time of *Ahaz*, the Affairs of the Kingdom of *Judah* ſeem'd adverſe and threatning, till at laſt they became quite deſperate, and ſo both the Pledge of the Continuance of the Kingdom under the Line of *David*,

David, and of *Canaan* it ſelf, ſeem'd to loſe all their Force and Virtue; God ſaw fit to ſupply this Defect; and keep their Hopes alive by clearer Predictions of the univerſal and perpetual Kingdom of *David*, or of the Son of *David*, or the *Meſſiah*, by a Succeſſion of Prophets, from *Iſaiah* to *Malachi*; who ſpake not only of this Kingdom, of its Extent and Duration; but of the Righteouſneſs it ſhould introduce, and of Life, as the Reward of that Righteouſneſs, (*Iſaiah* liii. liv. 12, 17. *Jer.* xxiii. 5, 6. xxxi. 31—35. xxxiii. 15, 16. *Dan.* ix. 24. xii. 2, 3. *Hab.* ii. 4.

This Succeſſion of Prophets had alſo this in common with the Prophets that went before them, that they were often ſent to explain the Law, or to give new Rules for their Conduct, on particular Occaſions; to exhort, admoniſh, reprove, threaten, comfort, or animate this People, as there was Occaſion. For the Prophets are to be conſider'd, as having a ſort of legatine Commiſſion from God, if I may be allow'd to uſe that Expreſſion (eſpecially ſuch as were ſent to the Houſe of *Iſrael* after their Revolt from the Line of *David*) according as the Circumſtances of the Nation requir'd. For to the Nation they were ſent, not to particular Perſons; and to the Nation, were their Rules, Admonitions, Reproofs, Denunciations, Encouragements, and Promiſes given; and nationally are they to be underſtood: Though there are ſeveral Things interſpers'd, relating

to the Religion of Nature, and of *Abraham*, and the farther Expectation of being deliver'd from Death, and adopted to eternal Life, by Prophecies clear enough to keep ſuch an Hope alive in their Minds (particularly in the Books of *Deuteronomy*, *Joſhua*, and the Prophets) as the ſureſt Principle of national Fidelity and Obedience; together with entire Books written for their Inſtruction in moral and divine Things: Such as the Book of *Job*, *Pſalms*, *Proverbs*, and *Eccleſiaſtes*.

But though it was an earthly Kingdom, and immediately anſwer'd the Ends of ſuch a Kingdom, and no other; yet it was alſo deſign'd for other Purpoſes. Particularly it did not only ſerve to put the *Iſraelites* perpetually in mind of God, as the Creator and Governor of the World, as the Rewarder of the *Patriarchs*, and as the God of *Abraham*, whenever they had to do with Him as the King of *Iſrael*; (all the Homage that was to be paid to Him as King of *Iſrael*, being ſuited to the Character of an heavenly King, though condeſcending to act as an earthly King;) but it was ſet up in the World, as a Light on a Hill (as the Family of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were before) in order to make all the World gaze on it, and enquire after the *God of Iſrael*; after the End for which ſuch particular Laws, and ſo peculiar a Polity was given this People; and after the Expectation this People had, either near

or

or more remote; or that might be reaſonably entertain'd about them. See *Sherlock on Providence*, p. 393.

Nor was it deſign'd only to raiſe an Expectation among the *Jews*, and among Mankind, of the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, but to prepare Things for it: So as to raiſe the greater Attention to it at Chriſt's Appearance, and ſo as that it might be known when it ſhould take Place, at his being ſeated on his Throne, *at the right Hand of the Majeſty on high.* [See *Sherlock on Providence*, p. 364.] This was done by Prophecies, and ſuch Analogies, as I ſhall briefly mention preſently.

As theſe were the great and ultimate Ends, for which the earthly Kingdom was erected, ſo in the mean time God deſign'd, by making the proſperous and adverſe State of that Kingdom (both within it ſelf, and with reſpect to its Neighbours) always keep a due Proportion to the Virtue and Vice of the Bulk of the People, to furniſh a Story, from whence the nobleſt Moral might be drawn; not only for the Benefit of themſelves, and of their Poſterity, but of other Perſons and Nations that were either Cotemporary with them, or that ſucceeded them.

And if I may be allow'd to anticipate my Subject a little, ſince I am on this Head, rather than return to it again; I would obſerve, that it muſt be viſible to every one, that compares the earthly with the heavenly Kingdom, that

there is a great Similitude and Analogy between them: At leaſt between the great Outlines of them: That is, that the heavenly Kingdom anſwers all thoſe Purpoſes to Men's Minds in a very ſuperior Manner, which the earthly Kingdom ſerved to Mens Bodies. And without all doubt this Similitude or Analogy was deſign'd with great Wiſdom and Beauty by the Framer of them, to let us, who live in the new Age, ſee that they had one Author; and that the one was deſign'd at laſt to lead Men into the other; ſo that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* was able to ſhew the *Jews*, that whatever was excellent in the Tabernacle, Temple, Altar, Prieſthood, or Sacrifices of the earthly Kingdom, *for the purifying of the Fleſh*, was provided in a much higher Degree *in the Kingdom that could not be ſhaken*, towards the *purifying the Conſciences* of its Subjects *from dead Works*. But I do not pretend that the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle, Temple, Altar, High-prieſt and Sacrifices, when they were appointed, were deſign'd to intimate to the *Iſraelites*, at that time, that there was to be a chriſtian Tabernacle or Temple, Altar, High-prieſt, and Sacrifice; ſince I don't find by any Paſſage in the Old Teſtament, that any ſuch Thing was intended by them; or by any Paſſage in the *Old Teſtament*, or in the New, that they had any ſuch Effect. But on the contrary, plain Hints in both, eſpecially in the latter, that they

they did not produce any ſuch Sentiments in the Minds of that People. I ſhould rather therefore from theſe Obſervations, as well as from the Nature of the Reſemblances and Analogies themſelves, conclude that they were ſuch as might be traced after the heavenly Kingdom took Place, according to the Idea or Model of which they were framed, rather than ſuch, as could prefigure the Chriſtian Tabernacle or Temple, High-prieſt, Altar or Sacrifice before hand. And by the by, I believe this will be found to be the Caſe of Prophecies too in a good meaſure, *&c.* Beſides, the Expreſſions that are us'd by the *New Teſtament Writers* concerning this Matter, fully confirm this Opinion. For on this Account the Holy Place [Sanctuary] is call'd the *Antitype* (as ἀντίτυπα ſhould be render'd) *of the true. Heb.* ix. 24. And when [the Sanctuary, or] Holy Places are ſaid to be the Antitypes of the true, the Meaning is, that [the Sanctuary, or] Holy Places were made after the Type or Model of the true Sanctuary or Holy Place. For as τύπος, a Type, ſignifies a Model, ἀντίτυπος, the Antitype, ſignifies what is made after that Model. See Doctor *Sykes Eſſay*, &c. p. 181, 182. The firſt Divine that has given Occaſion to think juſtly on this Subject: Though in expreſs Contradiction to this Text, the earthly Sanctuary has been called the Type of the heavenly: Whereas the heavenly Sanctuary is here ſuppoſed

ſed to be the Type, and the earthly Sanctuary is expreſly ſaid to be the Antitype. So likewiſe St. *Paul* calls the *Law a Shadow*, Heb. x. 1. *Coloſ.* ii. 17. And he in the laſt Text adds, *That the Body is Chriſt:* That is, the Chriſtian Religion, or the heavenly Kingdom, is the Body, which caſts the Shadow, *viz.* the earthly Kingdom. It is here very pertinent to our purpoſe, to obſerve, that a Shadow is only ſuch a Reſemblance as repreſents the Outlines of the Body, but is not ſuch a particular and diſtinct Reſemblance, as a Picture or Image is, which repreſents the particular Features of the Face, and every particular part of the Body. This is the expreſs Aſſertion, *Heb.* x. 1. where the Author ſays, *For the Law having a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image* [εἰκόνα] *of the Things, can never with thoſe Sacrifices — make the Comers thereunto perfect.* This may ſerve not only to confirm the Notion I here bring it to ſupport, but what I advanc'd but juſt before, *viz.* That the Law was ſuch a Repreſentation of the Goſpel as would ſhew the Analogy after the Goſpel took place, rather than prefigure it before hand.

From hence we may farther ſee, how Chriſt is ſaid to be in the Law and the Prophets: Namely, as a Type or Model may be ſaid to be in its Antitype, or that which is made after that Model: Or as a Body may be ſaid to be in a Shadow, that repreſents the Outlines of

it: Or as a ſtately Building deſign'd for the Heir, when at full Age, may be ſaid to be in a leſs Building of the ſame Proportions, built of worſe Materials, intended for the Heir during his Nonage. In a Word, Chriſt may be ſaid to be in the Law (not typically indeed, but) antitypically, umbratically, and analogically.

It has been already obſerv'd, that the Law of the earthly Kingdom was deadly. And ſince it was, it was happy, that being made only between God and one Family, *viz.* of *Iſrael*, it could not diſanul the Covenant or Promiſe, which God had made four hundred Years before to *Abraham*, and all the Families of the Earth, that ſhould imitate his Faith and Obedience, as St. *Paul* is ſhewn to argue with great Force by Mr. *Lock*, in his incomparable Note on *Gal.* iii. 15—21. and therefore though God could juſtify none of the Subjects of his earthly Kingdom to eternal Life, by the Rule, Law or Conſtitution of that Kingdom; yet he juſtify'd as many as were the ſpiritual Seed, or Children of *Abraham*, i. e. *who trod in the Steps of his Faith and Obedience*, Gal. iii. 6—10. Rom. iv. 10—13. according to the Promiſe and Covenant made with *Abraham*, and all his Seed, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*; Rom. iii. 30. Of the latter Sort were the Proſelytes of the Gate, ſuch as are deſcrib'd, *Pſal.* xxvi. 3—7. *Who were to receive the Bleſſing of the God of Jacob*: And ſuch in every Age, and in every Nation, that

that *feared God and wrought Righteouſneſs*, Acts x. 34, 35. So that *David*, who well knew there was *no Sacrifice* appointed by the Law of *Moſes* for Murther and Adultery, and ſuch Breaches of the moral Law, *Pſal.* li. 10. but that *the Soul that ſinned ſhould die*, (See 2 *Sam.* xii. 13.) *Yet knew the Bleſſedneſs of him whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity*, Pſal. xxxii. 1, 2. Rom. iv. 6—9. And knew too, that he was that bleſſed Perſon, who was ſincere, *or in whoſe Spirit there is no Guile*, Ver. 2. Or as he ſays in another *Pſalm*, who was of *a broken and a contrite Heart*, Pſal. li. 17. Thus this, tho' an earthly or temporal Kingdom, was the only Kingdom, *and the Iſraelites*, and ſuch as joyn'd with them, the *only People God had in the World; from the time of erecting this Kingdom, to the ſending down of the Holy Ghoſt.*

John Baptiſt indeed came preaching above three Years before, that *Men ſhould repent, becauſe the Kingdom of God was at hand:* The Kingdom which ſeveral of the *Prophets*, and *Daniel* in particular had foretold, as the fifth Monarchy, *Dan.* ix. 14. And the Word himſelf condeſcending to take Fleſh did the ſame; and ſent out his twelve Apoſtles, and after them his ſeventy Diſciples in his Lifetime to do the like: And taught Men to pray that this *Kingdom might come*, that is, might come

come ſpeedily: *Mat.* vi. 10. And after he had fully taught a Rule, and had been himſelf an Example of that Righteouſneſs, which if his Diſciples were conform'd to, he aſſured them they would obtain eternal Life, and had as a Son become obedient unto Death, God begat him from the Dead, making him the Firſt-fruits of thoſe who ſlept; whereby he *declar'd him to be his Son*, Rom. i. 4. and the *Heir of all Things*. In a few Days after He *gave him Glory*, 1 Pet. i. 21. and veſted him with kingly Power, upon his triumphal Aſcenſion; when he *firſt entered Heaven for us*, or as *our Forerunner*, and *ſate down at the right Hand of God*: And being then alſo *anointed with the Oil of Gladneſs above his Fellows*, (Heb. i. 9.) *Angels voluntarily ſubjecting themſelves to him*: Or in other Words of Scripture, *being filled with all Fulneſs* as the Head of his Kingdom, Church and People, *He filled his Apoſtles* with ſuch a proportionable Fulneſs under him, as fitted them to be the chief Miniſters of his Kingdom; enabling them (by the Holy Ghoſt ſhed down upon them, *Acts* ii. 33.) to convince the *Jews*, that he *was exalted to the right Hand of God, or to all Power*: Enabling them alſo to perſwade the *Jews* to be reconciled to God, and to publiſh the Laws and the Myſteries of this Kingdom, or to open the State of it. When I ſay that the *Apoſtles* were enabled to convince, perſwade, and inſtruct the *Jews*; I

mean Individuals; for to ſuch only were they ſent. Chriſt alſo filled others as inferior Miniſters of his Church or Kingdom, for other Purpoſes; namely, to teach, exhort, admoniſh, reprove or comfort his People, or diſcharge other Offices in it, according to its various Exigencies.

Then the Kingdom of God, of Chriſt, or of Heaven (called alſo the *Kingdom of Light*) took Place in the World. The *Few* that became a Subject of this Kingdom, or one of God's People in it, became ſo only by believing Chriſt to be riſen and exalted to be the King of it, and by making an open Profeſſion of his Belief, at his being publickly tranſlated into this Kingdom by Baptiſm; and if he perſevered in obeying the Laws of this Kingdom, which were mild and gentle; and to which the Frame and Conſtitution of it gave him ſufficient Encouragement, Motives and Aſſiſtances, he became one of its faithful Subjects, ſanctify'd in Soul, Body and Spirit; and entitled by the Grace of it, to the Reward of an endleſs Life.

By this new Frame and Conſtitution, eternal Life was far more firmly aſſur'd than by the *Abrahamick* Covenant, by the *Jewiſh* Conſtitution, by the Kingdom ſettled on the Family of *David*, by the Predictions of the Prophets, or by the Predictions, or the Preaching of *John Baptiſt*, or of Jeſus, whilſt he was a Prophet upon Earth. For Believers

now

now were not only entitled to it, by being Children of *Abraham*, or of the *Prophets*, by being *Iſraelites* or Subjects of the Line of *David*, or by being Diſciples of *John Baptiſt* or of *Jeſus*; but in as much as they being *Partakers of Fleſh and Blood and he alſo taking part of the ſame*, (being a Son of *Abraham*, Rom. i. 4. *Heb.* ii. 11 — 15.) died and revived, that we, through our Relation to him, as the Firſt-born among many Brethren (or our elder Brother) through the Spirit of God, which he receiv'd, and then ſent from the Father, at his Aſcenſion, might be *begotten to a lively Hope*, or become aſſured of our Adoption; that is, of our being *the Sons, and* conſequently *the Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 15 — 18. Or as it is expreſs'd, *Gal.* v. 4 — 7. *God ſent forth his Son — that ye might receive the Adoption of Sons. And becauſe ye are Sons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying* Abba, *Father.* Thus the Spirit ſent down from the Father and the Son, became the Earneſt of the heavenly Inheritance to Chriſtians, as *Canaan*, and the Kingdom of *David*, had been to the *Iſraelites* before. From this Time God and Father are not only very often promiſcuouſly us'd, but join'd together in Scripture. For though they had been us'd promiſcuouſly before, as has been already obſerved, yet this was little underſtood, or at leaſt attended to

in our Saviour's Time; when through the Corruptions that prevailed, the *Patriarchal*, *Abrahamick* and *Prophetick*, as well as natural Religion, and a ſpiritual *Meſſiah* were ſo much forgot, and the temporal Kingdom ſo wholly regarded, that our Saviour tells them, that no *Man knows the Father, ſave the Son; and he to whom the Son will reveal him*, Mat. xi. 27.

Beſides, our Adoption is not only farther ſecur'd in *Chriſt Jeſus*, by God's becoming our Father, and our becoming his Sons and Heirs, in the Manner I have juſt now mention'd; but as Chriſt *Jeſus* our elder Brother, and with whom we are joint Heirs, is actually poſſeſs'd of his Inheritance; and is become the firſt Fruits of the Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion: He being firſt entered into Heaven, and for all Believers; (even for thoſe, who had only an Adoption in *Abraham*) as the Forerunner: And to us (who have our Adoption in right of being Chriſt's Brethren, as well as in right of being the Children of *Abraham*) as taking Poſſeſſion, and preparing a Place for us: God not having deſign'd to give any thing more to *Abraham*, and his ſpiritual Seed, before Chriſt, than a Title to Life; whilſt the actual Poſſeſſion of Life was reſerved for one, that was far more Righteous than *Abraham*, who was perfectly and completely ſo, even *Chriſt the Righteous*. So that as Death actually enter'd by *Adam*'s Sin, Life actually enters by Chriſt's

Chriſt's Obedience: Notwithſtanding that a Title to Life was given to *Abraham*, and his ſpiritual Seed before. And in this Senſe I underſtand St. *Paul*, *Rom.* v. 12——21.

But farther, we are not only entitled to the Inheritance by our Adoption in *Chriſt Jeſus*, but as it is a *Reward* given us by the ſame Law of this Kingdom, that preſcribes our Duty, as the Terms of obtaining that Reward. This Law muſt therefore be conſidered as a Covenant, ſince it does not only preſcribe our Duty, and entitle every faithful Subject to a general Protection; (which every Kingdom propoſes to its Subjects) but to the ſpecial Reward of a glorious and eternal Life, from the unſpeakable Bounty and Munificence of our heavenly King. And farther, this Law muſt likewiſe be conſider'd as a Covenant, which Chriſt has mediated between God and us.

In every well conſtituted Kingdom, Law and Compact is the Security of the Subject; not only of ſuch as preſerve their Duty and Allegiance, but of ſuch as have fallen into Rebellion and Revolt. How much more muſt the Law and Covenant of this Kingdom be thought to be ſuch a Security, when we conſider it as mediated by one of ſo great Power and Dignity, as the ſecond Perſon in it.

But we may be ſtill farther aſſur'd, that the Law of this Kingdom ſhall have its full Force and Effect, ſince the Mediator of the Covenant is made the King of this Kingdom, and is in actu-

actual Poſſeſſion of it, for our Benefit, and appointed by the Father to keep Poſſeſſion, and to prepare a Place for us. And in order to the better adminiſtring, it has all Power over all Things in Heaven and Earth put into his Hands (as the King of his Church) him only excepted, who has put all things under him. He has likewiſe all Judgment committed to him, in order to judge and determine of the Actions of all Men, to pronounce Sentence on them, and to award Execution at the Conſummation of all things. To which end, the Goſpel aſſures us, that he will raiſe the Wicked as well as the Juſt, in order to his paſſing this final Judgment. So that he has not only Life, but a Power to give an endleſs Life, and inflict the ſecond Death, according to *what Men have done in the Fleſh, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

This Kingdom, and univerſal Power, Chriſt has alſo obtained on a Covenant between the Father and himſelf, *viz.* becauſe *he was* [or became] *the Son of Man*, John v. 27. And he having performed the Condition, which in other Words was his taking Fleſh, and dying on the Croſs, cannot fail of having this Kingdom and Power confirm'd to him, as the Reward of his Obedience. So that coming to his Kingdom and Power on the Terms of ſo painful a Submiſſion to the Will of his heavenly Father, he is often repreſented as coming to them by Purchaſe; and as purchaſing his Church,

Church, the Subjects of this Kingdom, whom his Power is to ſecure, (from the Bondage of Sin and *Satan*, and its Wages, Death) *with his own Blood*, Acts xx. 28. Epheſ. i 14. Whereas God only purchas'd or redeem'd the People of his earthly Kingdom to himſelf from *Egyptian* Bondage, *by almighty Power, and an out-ſtretched Arm*, Exod. xii. 6. Deut. iv. 20. and xxxii. 6. *Pſalm* lxxii. 2. And the Security, which we may ſuppoſe Chriſt to have acquir'd by his purchaſing us with ſo great a Price, muſt needs be our Security too; ſince he is our immediate King, and we are immediately his People, *and the Lot of his Inheritance*, Epheſ. i. 14.

But leſt any Suſpicion ſhould yet remain in the Minds of guilty Men (who are ever full of all poſſible Miſgivings) of what might be the Event; ſince after all God is greater than the King of this Kingdom, or the Mediator of this Covenant; and that he is always conſider'd as the offended Party; leſt any Jealouſy, I ſay, ſhould lurk in our Minds on this account, Chriſt is repreſented not only as the King of this Kingdom, but as the *High-prieſt* of our Profeſſion, offering himſelf to God as a Sacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling Savour by the eternal Spirit, and powerfully interceeding as an Advocate with him, in virtue of that Sacrifice, in order to obtain all Bleſſings from him, and diſpenſing them to us; *and we are ſure that God always heareth him.* From this Con-

Conſideration it is, that we are commanded to pray to the Father in his Name: Coming to God through an Interceſſor being a proper Support of the Faith of ſuch who have been guilty: As we may all ſee by conſulting our own Minds, or the Hiſtory of Mankind, even when we are only guilty to one another. Beſides, that it is but fit and congruous, that if the Father diſpenſes his Bleſſings to us by the Son, we ſhould offer up our Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſes by him alſo. And it ſeems too, that Chriſt being our High-prieſt, and preſenting himſelf a Sacrifice to God for us, is alſo deſign'd to ſhew us the Holineſs of the Supreme and Subordinate King of this Kingdom; and of the Law he has ſet us, and to furniſh us with powerful Motives to obey them.

But that we may have all poſſible Aſſurance, that God will hear Chriſt at all times, we have the ſtrongeſt Proofs that he has heard him. For on praying the Father for the Spirit, as he ſaid he would, *John* xiv. 16. he received it, and ſent it down on his *Apoſtles*, and *firſt Diſciples* in proper Proportions and Degrees, as he had before promiſed. Thus this Spirit was firſt in Promiſe, and then in Fact an Aſſurance, that God had heard Chriſt; and a *Pledge*, that he would hear him in all his Interceſſions for us.

This Office of an High prieſt is alſo farther confirm'd to him, and conſequently to us, by *the Oath of God*; who has ſworn to him, *Thou art*

art a Prieſt for ever after the Order of Melchizedeck, *Pſal.* cx. 4. *Heb.* vii. 21. *That ſo by two immutable things, by which it is impoſſible for God to lie, we might have ſtrong Conſolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope ſet before us.*

By all theſe Ways we are aſſur'd of its being God's good Pleaſure to give us the Kingdom. But yet leſt after all we ſhould have any doubt of the Sufficiency of Chriſt's Power, or of his Intereſt to preſerve us to it, and we ſhould imagine, that any might be able to pluck us out of his Hand, notwithſtanding the Kingdom and Power that is thus committed and ſecured to him; yet ſtill, I ſay, as we can't but know, that none can pluck us out of his Father's Hand, we are (to prevent any doubt or ſuſpicion on this Head) expreſly aſſur'd, that *He and the Father are One*, John x. 34. And that we ſhall be *kept by the mighty Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.* Oh! *the Height and Depth, the Length and Breadth, of the Love of Chriſt that paſſeth Knowledge!*

Finally, That thoſe who ſhould live in the Ages that were diſtant from the moſt known and important Facts of this Tranſaction, might not have the leaſt Heſitation, about the Truth of them (on which the Doctrines and Duties that the Subjects of this Kingdom are to believe and practiſe, together with their Hopes, depend) Chriſt has inſtituted a Feaſt at his

Table, (ſuch an one as ſuits the State of this Kingdom, and the Bulk of the Subjects of it,) as a proper and ſolemn Memorial to be often repeated, in order to preſerve the Evidence of the Truth of theſe Facts in ſuch a Manner, as is leaſt liable to be counterfeited, (accompanied with Words which demonſtrate the Inſtitutor of this Feaſt to be the High-prieſt of our Profeſſion, and the Prince of our Salvation) analogous to the Paſſover, the moſt ſolemn Feaſt of the earthly Kingdom, and calculated to raiſe the moſt proper Sentiments in our Minds towards him, and all our Fellow Subjects, till *the Lord himſelf comes the ſecond Time, without a Sacrifice for Sin unto Salvation.* To which purpoſe, as well as thoſe of offering up our joint Prayers and Praiſes, and Alms, and of admoniſhing one another in his Name, Chriſtians muſt aſſemble themſelves together in a decent and orderly Manner.

All the Texts that relate to *forgiving Sin, and imputing Righteouſneſs; or that ſpeak of the Righteouſneſs of God, or of Faith, or of Faith working by Love, or of the Works of Faith, or of* Abraham, *or of our being juſtified by Works*, are to be underſtood either to relate to the Covenant with *Abraham*, or to the State of the Kingdom of Heaven.

From this Time forward this heavenly Kingdom became ſo eminently the Kingdom of God, and the Subjects of it ſo eminently his People [the λαὸς *that ſhould be born*] that the

the other low earthly Kingdom deſigned chiefly to prepare things for this, and his earthly People the Subjects of that Kingdom are ſcarce ever conſider'd: Though that earthly Kingdom continued, and the *Jews* remain'd the Subjects of it for near forty Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion to his Throne; God affording them that Time and Opportunity to enter into his ſpiritual and heavenly Kingdom, and giving them the laſt and moſt demonſtrative Evidence of their Obligations to enter into it by the Convictions of the Spirit; as well as freſh Motives to that Purpoſe, by the Provocation God ſaw fit to give them to Jealouſy (ſome few Years after it had been only offer'd to them) by taking in firſt the Devout, and then the Idolatrous *Gentiles* to be his People, and the Subjects of this heavenly Kingdom; who had been till then (a very few excepted) *Enemies, walking according to the Prince of the Power of the Air*, ever ſince the Apoſtacy ſoon after the Flood; and having a great part of that time been kept ſeparate from God's People (or the People of his earthly Kingdom) and the Children of his Family, by the ceremonial Law, the Wall of Partition, which immur'd or enclos'd the *Jews*, and kept out the *Gentiles* from them, *Gal.* iii. 23. But that Wall of Partition being now to be broken down, and an Embaſſage of Peace being to be ſent to the *Gentiles*, by *Peter*, *Paul* and *Barnabas*, to perſwade them to be reconciled, and to enter

into his heavenly Kingdom, and ſo to become Fellow Members, and Subjects of that Kingdom, (without being ſubject to the Laws of his earthly Kingdom) with the Remnant of *Jews* that had, or ſhould enter into it (and remain Subjects to the Laws of his earthly Kingdom) God's Purpoſe took effect, (for who ſhall reſiſt his Will?) And all of them together came to have God for their God in the moſt high and exalted Senſe, as they became his ſpiritual People (*by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. iii. 29. and ix. 24, 25.) the *true* Jews *or* Iſrael *of God*, or *the Circumciſion not made with Hands*. Rom. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 16. *A choſen Generation, a Royal Prieſthood, an Holy Nation, a peculiar* (*or a purchas'd*) *People*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Both *Jew and* Gentile, *Circumciſion and Uncircumciſion*, Barbarian, Scythian, *Bond and Free*. For though the *Jews* had been a holy People from the firſt, acknowledging the only true God, and the Rule of Virtue, and were at this Time free from Idolatry; yet they had ſtrangely deviated from that Rule to ſuperſtitious and impious Traditions. But now they were enabled to underſtand and obſerve the Rule of Virtue far better than ever they had done before; (as the Prophet *Jeremiah* foretold they ſhould) and ſo became God's People in another Manner than they had been his People: *Not according to the Covenant of the Tables of Stone, but by putting his Laws into their inward Parts*,

Parts, and writing them in their Hearts, Jer. xxxi. 31. quoted *Heb.* viii. 10. and alluded to 2 *Cor.* iii. 3——10. And as the *Jews* now became more eminently Holy; ſo the *Gentiles* now firſt became [Saints, or] Holy, at their being *tranſlated out of the Kingdom of Darkneſs into this Kingdom of Light,* 1 Cor. i. 2. Epheſ. i. 1. Then firſt *renouncing the Works of Darkneſs,* and ſeparating themſelves from the reſt of the World, which lay in Idolatry and Vice.

From what has been hitherto ſaid of the *Abrahamick* Covenant, and the Conſtitution of the heavenly Kingdom, we may ſee, that they are the ſame in Subſtance, and differ chiefly as two Covenants between the Father of a Family and his Children may be ſuppoſed to differ; the one of which is more fully explain'd, and corroborated than the other: Or as a Covenant between the Father of a Family and his Children may be ſuppoſed to differ from the ſame Covenant between the ſame Parties, conſider'd not only as a Father of a Family with his Children, but as a King with his People. In order to give a fuller Security to their Adoption or Inheritance, by Law and Compact, the moſt ſolemnly ratified and confirmed, ſo as to entitle them to their Inheritance, not only as their Inheritance, but as their Reward.

And from all that has been hitherto ſaid, we may ſee, that the heavenly Inheritance

was

was firſt intimated to *Adam*, and to the *Patriarchs*, (both by the gracious Diſcoveries God made to his own Family, and by the amazing Curſes and Judgments he brought on the Family of the Devil) was expreſly promis'd, ſeal'd, ſworn and pledg'd to *Abraham*, and to all his ſpiritual Seed through him; (though the Knowledge of the Promiſe, Seal, Oath and Pledge, was not publiſh'd beyond his Family, and ſuch as would come to enquire of that Family about it) was pointed out by the Imperfection and the Antitype of the *Jewiſh* Conſtitution; was pledg'd afreſh in Promiſe, by the Covenant with *David*, and in fact, to his Seed, who ſat for above four hundred Years on his Throne; was foretold by the *Prophets*, (when the former Pledges ſeem'd to fail) as what ſhould take Place under the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, the Son of *David*, in the Age to come; was propheſied of by *John Baptiſt*, as what would be accompliſhed in *Jeſus*, whom he pointed to as then among them; was preached by *Jeſus* in the Days of his Fleſh, as what would take Place after his being lifted up; was actually poſſeſs'd and enter'd upon by him, and for us, at his Aſcenſion, as the Firſt-born among many (Sons of *Abraham*, who were all his) Brethren; was ſworn to *Chriſt*; was ſignified by Baptiſm; was commemorated by the Lord's Supper; and laſt of all, was ſeal'd and pledg'd by the Spirit, as a Proof that Chriſt has Power

er to give Life, (from his being exalted to all Power both of Government and Judgment,) and that he will in due Time actually give it his Brethren and Subjects, by that very Spirit by which God rais'd him, and by which he will raiſe us up from the Dead: By which alſo ſome of the *Apoſtles* went and preached this whole Doctrine to all the *Jews*, and others of them, according to his Command, to all the *Gentiles*.

Thus God had from the Shedding down of the Holy Ghoſt (the firſt Act of Chriſt's regal Power) till the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, two Kingdoms and two People in the World; but of different Kinds, *viz.* an earthly and an heavenly one. And though the Subjects of the earthly Kingdom had no Privilege in the heavenly Kingdom, beyond the *Gentiles*, who were not Subjects of the earthly Kingdom, beſides the firſt Offer of entring into his heavenly Kingdom; yet they continued the Subjects or People of his earthly Kingdom, under his temporal Protection, (ſuch at leaſt as was ſuited to the low State of their Fidelity and Obedience, and to the wiſe and merciful Ends of his univerſal Government of the World,) owing and paying Obedience to the Law of his fleſhly or carnal Commandments. This muſt neceſſarily have been the Caſe, ſince his ſpiritual Kingdom related wholly to the Minds of Men,

Men, and alter'd nothing in their civil Obligations. Indeed it bound down their Political (as well as Oeconomical) Duties more ſtrictly upon them. *Rom.* xiii. 1—8. 1 *Cor.* vii. 10——25. So far was it from diſſolving any civil Polity or Government in the World; or theirs in particular.

But when after all the moſt gracious and condeſcending Methods had been try'd, the Subjects of this earthly Kingdom would not ſerve God, and obey the Voice of his Son, *the great Prophet*, as they had promis'd they would, as a fundamental Stipulation at the erecting the earthly Kingdom, *Deut.* xviii. 15——20. *Exod.* xx. 19. *Acts* iii. 23. Nor would not enter into his heavenly Kingdom, but continued a rebellious and contumacious People for about forty Years, after the erecting this Kingdom, (the Time that he had ſuffer'd the Manners of their Fathers in the Wilderneſs,) he brought *the People of the Prince*, (call'd ſo, becauſe he was the Head of the fourth (or only) Monarchy then in the World, according to *Daniel*'s prophetick Language) upon them; as *Daniel* had foretold, (*Chap.* ix. 26.) and as Jeſus himſelf foretold alſo, (*Luke* xix. 41—45. and xxi. 20.) and deſtroyed them; whereby he abdicated this his earthly Kingdom, affording the *Jews* no manner of Protection; they having entirely

ly forfeited it, and the keeping up that earthly Kingdom, being no longer of that uſe to the *Jews*, or to the World, for which it was chiefly and ultimately intended; now that the heavenly Kingdom had ſo fully taken Place: For *Chriſt was the End of the Law*, Rom. x. 4. And it had been foretold, that *when He for whom the Government was reſerved* [ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ᾧ ἀπόκειται] *ſhould come, and the People ſhould be gather'd unto him, the Sceptre ſhould depart from* Judah, *and a Lawgiver from between his Feet*, Gen. xlix. 10. according to ſome, and thoſe I think the beſt, Readings of the Septuagint. Whereupon as God ceas'd to be their King, they ceas'd to be his People, or to owe any Allegiance to the Laws of his earthly Kingdom; and became the avow'd and determin'd *Enemies* of his heavenly Kingdom, *Rom.* xi. 28. The very Character of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, Rom. v. 10, 11.

From this Time God has had but one Kingdom, and one People in the World, (*viz.* a heavenly and a ſpiritual Kingdom over a willing People) ruling only over the Spirit of their Minds. However, for their *Father's ſake* (upon whoſe Account the *Iſraelites* were firſt taken to be a People, *Deut.* iv. 37.) the *Jews* are ſtill ſo beloved, that it is probable, there will come a time, according as God ſeems to have reveal'd it by his holy Apoſtles and Prophets,

that they ſhall be reſtor'd, not only to be his ſpiritual Subjects, but his earthly People again in their own Land. *O! the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!*

This earthly Kingdom however, when reſtor'd, is to ceaſe before the heavenly one. For that will not determine but with the End and Conſummation of all God's Diſpenſations towards the Children of Men. When all the Enemies of God's Family and Kingdom, and of his Children and People, are *to be put under Chriſt's Feet; the laſt of which ſhall be Death:* Then will his Kingdom appear in its brighteſt Glory. *And when the Father ſhall have ſubdued all Things unto him, [Chriſt] then alſo ſhall the Son himſelf be ſubject unto him [the Father] that God may be all in all,* 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, 28.

That the one great Deſign of Revelation, and the one great Mean, by which that Deſign has been purſued in the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God towards Mankind (though diſcovered

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in different Ages of the World in different Ways) may appear the more clear and perſpicuous; I will endeavour to draw what I have ſaid a little cloſer together, in a ſhort *Recapitulation* of the whole.

Which is this: That after *Adam*, whom God had created innocent or perfect, and whom, as ſuch, he had veſted at his Creation with the Inheritance of an animal, terreſtrial Glory, Dominion, Bliſs and Immortality, (by which he became *the Son of God*, Luke iii. ult.) and that not only for himſelf, but for his Poſterity, had forfeited it for them as well as for himſelf; by eating of the Tree of Death, *or of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, in diſobedience to God's expreſs Command, and in compliance with the Temptation of the Devil: It being the good Pleaſure of God, I ſay, that *Adam*, who had been thus his Son by Creation, with all his Deſcendants, the Sons of Men, ſhould not finally continue the Children of that apoſtate Spirit, and ſo remaining under the Power of Death, have their Portion with him in the *Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever*, through Deſpair of ever diverting the Diſpleaſure of their Maker; or through their being without a well grounded Hope of obtaining a Recompence ſufficient to ſupport them in a conſtant Courſe of Self-denial and Obedience; God was mercifully pleaſed to give ſome Intimations to *Adam* and the *Patriarchs*, (particularly to *Enoch*

and *Noah*,) that He would become a Rewarder after Death [or a Father] of all thoſe who ſhould diligently ſeek after his Will and obey it. I mean that Will of his *written in their Hearts*, or imparted by Revelation, relating to their Temper and Conduct, which was ſo perfectly ſuited to their Nature and Circumſtances, as to render it fit for them to ſearch after and obey it, abſtracted from all Conſiderations of this future Reward. On the other Hand, God alſo gave ſeveral Inſtances of his high Diſpleaſure againſt the Family of *Cain* and *Canaan*, (which are to be conſidered in their reſpective Ages, as the avowed Families of the *Devil*,) and againſt ſuch as mingled with them, (who rejected and deſpiſed all the gracious Intimations of his Purpoſe of adopting the Children of Men,) thereby the better to keep the Children of his own Family in a juſt Awe and Fear of Him.

And to the Intent, that he might at the ſame Time aſſure them the more effectually of that his moſt gracious Purpoſe, he afterwards in great Tenderneſs and Condeſcenſion, vouchſafed to make an expreſs Covenant with *Abraham*, the Father of all the Faithful; in regard of his ſingular and unexampled Truſt in the Power of God, and Obedience to his Will, in the moſt trying Inſtances, that he would *Adopt* him to the Inheritance of a glorious, ſpiritual, and celeſtial Kingdom, Bliſs and Immortality, infinitely exceeding the Inheritance

heritance which Mankind loſt by the Diſobedience of *the Father of all the Living*. God was moreover pleaſed to give *Abraham* the Promiſe of *Canaan*, as a promis'd Pledge of his performing that better Promiſe; and Circumciſion, as a Seal to both theſe Promiſes: And was alſo pleaſed to ratify the Performance of them by an Oath. Nor did he make this Promiſe to *Abraham* alone, but in making it to him, he made it to all the Men of all the Families of the Earth, in all Ages, that ſhould become his Seed; that is, that ſhould imitate his Faith and Obedience.

He afterwards alſo, for ſeveral wiſe Reaſons, erected this Family, and ſuch as would joyn themſelves to them, into an *earthly Kingdom*, ſo conſtituted, as to point out a better; and as in many proper Ways to prepare Men and diſpoſe Things for the Eſtabliſhment of it; and to anſwer many other great Ends, both to them and the World, in their own Time, and in all future Ages. He alſo gave them the actual Poſſeſſion of *Canaan*; and afterwards made a Covenant, concerning the Family of *David*, (and confirm'd it by an Oath,) as Pledges of the Performance of this better Promiſe. And after the unpromiſing adverſe or deſperate Circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* Nation, made both the Pledges ſeem to loſe their Force with the *Jews*, this Hope was kept alive by Prophecies of the latter Prophets of a better Kingdom under the Meſ-

ſiah;

ſiah; eſpecially in the Minds of ſuch, as would become the *Children of the Prophets*, and imitate them in the Faith of theſe Predictions.

And to the Intent, that he might in due Time aſſure this Inheritance to them in a clearer and ſtronger Manner, than he had done by the Intimations to the Patriarchs, by the Covenant with *Abraham*, as the Father of a ſpiritual Family or Seed, or by the Covenant of *Sinai*, or of *David*, or by the latter Prophets, he firſt ſent his holy Child *Jeſus* to aſſure them of this, as a Prophet and Teacher of a higher kind than he had ever ſent before; and to give us a clear Rule and a perfect Example of ſuch a Righteouſneſs, (after the Forgiveneſs of what was paſt,) as would entitle us to this Inheritance. Whom, after that He had become obedient to Death, God raiſed from the Dead, and gave him Glory; erecting a Kingdom under him, as the Firſt-born among many Brethren; conſtituting him for this high and voluntary Act of Obedience, in ſuffering Death, the Heir and Lord of all things; that ſo if the *Jews*, or others, (whether they were already his adopted Children or not,) on a Meſſage ſent to them from himſelf by the *Apoſtles* of *Chriſt Jeſus*, would now become the faithful Subjects of this his heavenly Kingdom, and be publickly tranſlated into it by Baptiſm, they ſhould both be recovered from Death, the Appointment of the Sons of Men, and ſaved from Wrath to come, or the ſecond Death,

Death, the Portion and Reward of the Family and Kingdom of the Devil; and alſo have this heavenly Inheritance much more firmly ſecured to them in right of Children, by Adoption in *Abraham*, as the Father of the Faithful. For Chriſt was a Child of *Abraham*, *putting his Truſt in God*, Heb. xi. 13. and was actually raiſed from the Dead, and conſequently became their elder Brother. He alſo became their elder Brother on another Conſideration, *viz.* as he ſent to them the Spirit of their heavenly Father, now become the Spirit alſo of himſelf, their elder Brother, (on his receiving it from the Father,) as a Pledge and Earneſt of their Adoption; thereby confirming their Title to this Inheritance as *Heirs of God*, and making or conſtituting them *joint Heirs* with himſelf. But their Title to this Inheritance was yet more ſtrongly confirmed to them by this new Conſtitution; not only by its confirming their Title by Adoption, but by its giving them a new Title, *viz.* that of a *Reward* to their Obedience of the mild and gracious Law of this Kingdom: To which Reward they ſhould have an indefeaſible Title, by that very Law, which preſcribed the Terms of this Reward: The Law it ſelf, which is conſidered as a Covenant, (ſince it not only preſcribes the Duty of a Subject, but entitles every one that performs it, to this Reward,) being moreover ratified and confirmed by the moſt great and ſolemn Tranſactions, that we

can conceive between the Father, as the Monarch of the Univerſe, and the Man Chriſt Jeſus, as the King of this Kingdom under him; in behalf of the Kingdom which he was to receive from him, and in behalf of ſuch as would become the Subjects of it.

And to the Intent, that the moſt diſtant Ages of the World might be aſſured of the Truth of the moſt important Facts of this Tranſaction, he has inſtituted a Feaſt to be often repeated in his Kingdom, as an undoubted Memorial of them, analogous to the moſt ſolemn Feaſt of the earthly Kingdom, and calculated to raiſe the moſt proper Reflections in our Minds, till he *comes the ſecond Time without Sin unto Salvation.* To which and all the other holy Purpoſes, *viz.* of Baptiſm (mentioned before) Hearing the Word of God, public Prayers, Praiſes and Admonitions, Chriſtians muſt aſſemble themſelves with Decency and Order.

Thus has it pleaſed God in infinite Wiſdom and Mercy, to take the moſt wiſe and condeſcending Methods, in order to prevent our Deſpair, and to animate and confirm us in the Hope of ſuch a Degree of immortal and celeſtial Dominion, Bliſs and Glory, as would be infinitely ſuperior to all the low, mix'd and momentary Pleaſures, that might ſeduce us from our Duty, (and the Happineſs that both conſtitutes it to be our Duty, and that reſults from it,) without which ſuperior Reward, the grand Enemy of God's Kingdom, would for ever have

have diverted Mankind from any Endeavours after Obedience, or at leaſt from a ſteady Perſeverance in it: As he firſt tempted them to Apoſtacy by an Act of the higheſt Preſumption, from a vain Hope of gratifying a low Appetite of the Body, and a fooliſh and wicked Ambition of their Mind.

In order to underſtand the Nature of the earthly Kingdom of God over the *Iſraelites*, and the heavenly Kingdom of God over *Chriſtians* the more fully, it muſt always be remember'd, that as the former was erected many Ages before the latter, ſo the former continued near forty Years after the latter. During which Time theſe two Kingdoms were Cotemporary to each other.

And though it is probable that the earthly Kingdom may be again erected; yet it muſt ceaſe and determine before the heavenly one; which will not end but with the Conſummation of all Things.

Thus I have conſidered *Adam as a Son of God by Creation* before the Fall: And all Mankind after the Fall, either as the *adopted* Sons, and afterwards the People of God, or as the Children, and afterwards the Subjects of the Devil; and accordingly entitled to an endleſs Life, as it is deſcribed in Scripture, or appointed to the ſecond Death.

Corollary I.

As this is the Sum of what has been ſaid, ſo the Corollaries which may very fitly be drawn from it are, That *Religion*, or as ſome Divines have very juſtly diſtinguiſh'd it, the Religion of the End, has always been, and always will be the ſame, from the Beginning to the End of this World, and of that which is to come: But the *Religion of the Means* [Mean] has been ſomewhat different, in the different Ages of the Children of Men. By the Religion of the End, I mean the ſteady Government of our own Appetites and Paſſions, and a conſtant Benevolence to others, neceſſarily reſulting from the Frame of our *Nature*, and from the State of Things, conſider'd as the Law of a Being ſupremely powerful, wiſe and good, and to whom conſequently all Reverence, Gratitude, Obedience, Submiſſion, and Reſignation, are due. And in this Religion of the End, natural and reveal'd Religion, as to the Matter of them, are entirely the ſame. And by the Religion of the Means [Mean] (which has been the chief and peculiar Matter of Revelation,) I intend the Method which God in infinite Condeſcenſion and Kindneſs to Mankind, has uſed by Revelation, to keep or make them Religious: Such as the Method uſed with our firſt Parents in Inno-

Innocence; with them; and the Patriarchs after the Fall; with *Abraham*, and all that knowing his Story, ſhould imitate his Virtues; with the *Iſraelites*, and all that were acquainted with their Story, and then with the Diſciples of *John Baptiſt*, and of *Jeſus*, and the Believers in *Chriſt*. All which Methods will fall under the general Head of Motive, or Promiſe; very much heightned however, as it contains an Aſſurance of being delivered from the ſevereſt Threatning. Or if you will, this Matter may be a little more particularly ſtated thus. The Religion of the End is Piety, Virtue, or the Obedience of a Child of God. The Mean to keep or make Men Children of God, has been the promis'd Continuance of the Poſſeſſion, or the Hopes of ſuch a future Reward or Inheritance, as might preſerve Men in being obedient to God, or recover them to it, and to the Inheritance that belongs to it, after they were become Children of the Devil, and Heirs of Death and Wrath. That Inheritance was Paradiſe, and the promis'd Continuance of it on Condition of Obedience, to our firſt Parents in Innocence; and to them and their Deſcendants after the Fall, Heaven or eternal Life, as it is reveal-ed in Scripture, (*i. e.* a State of Dominion and Bliſs, to be enjoy'd in a celeſtial, ſpiritual, powerful, and glorious Body, in the Preſence and Glory of God, not ſubject to any future State of Trial,) through a Recovery from the

firſt Death, and Salvation from the ſecond Death. This could never have been diſcovered by our Reaſon, but was graciouſly hinted to our firſt Parents and the Patriarchs; expreſly promis'd to *Abraham*; pointed out by the Law and Conſtitution God gave the *Iſraelites*; pledg'd by the Poſſeſſion of *Canaan*, and afterwards by the Covenant with *David*, and his Line; clearly propheſy'd of, particularly by *John Baptiſt*; to be farther confirm'd by the *Meſſiah*; actually confirm'd by him, as a Prophet, to his Diſciples, whilſt on Earth; but chiefly by him as a King, to his Subjects, on his Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion into Heaven; as appear'd by his ſending down the Holy Ghoſt. Such as have uſed the ſeveral Methods of opening this great Mean of Religion, to the making themſelves Religious in the ſeveral Ages of the World, and have thereby promoted their Virtue and Piety, or the Temper and Conduct of a Child of God, have comply'd with the Obligations they were under, with regard to the Religion of the Means [Mean] and of the End.

It muſt at the ſame Time be obſerved, that all theſe ſeveral Methods, which are conſidered as the Religion of the Means [Mean] have been exactly ſuited to the different Circumſtances of Men and Things in theſe ſeveral Diſpenſations; the firſt beginning where one would reaſonably expect it, namely, with the Creation of Man; the reſt naturally following from the Fall of Man;

and

and all the former Methods leading to the laſt, centering in it, and being fully and glorioufly compleated by it.

Thus has the Religion of the Means [Mean] been ſomewhat different in reſpect of Clearneſs and Certainty, and different Accommodation to the different Circumſtances of Mankind, in the ſeveral Ages of the World; whilſt the Religion of the End has not only been invariably the ſame, but at the ſame Time always ſo certain and plain, as to be of it ſelf ſufficient to lead all Men to it, and to leave them without excuſe, if they did not know and practiſe it. However, to ſuch as have underſtood and practis'd it the beſt, better Means, or greater Aſſiſtances have been ſtill given as a Reward for the Improvement of what they already had. And when ſuch Means have been afforded, they have been always attended with ſufficient Evidence of their Fitneſs and Genuineneſs (as the Religion of the End has always been with the fulleſt Evidence of its Truth and Deſireableneſs) to convince honeſt and upright Minds, who alone would make any good Uſe of them; but without any ſuch Degree of Evidence, as would be unneceſſary to them, and would be waſted on others, namely, on depraved Minds; whoſe Addictedneſs to their Vices would render ſuch overbearing Evidence uſeleſs and ineffectual, if it had been indulged them.

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Corollary II.

From what has been ſaid, we may ſee, what Relation Faith bears to the Religion of the Means [Mean]: Or of what Uſe Faith is in reveal'd Religion. The Religion of the Means [Mean] as it has been juſt now ſtated, is the Method which God has taken to make Men Religious, by revealing certain Propoſitions to them. Now Faith, as it is here underſtood, is the Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of thoſe Propoſitions on divine Teſtimony; without which, thoſe Propoſitions could have no force on us. How vain then is the Objection of the Deiſts, that Chriſtians aſcribe a great deal too much to Faith, as it is here underſtood, becauſe Faith in this Senſe, (as muſt be allow'd) is no Virtue. They pretend that Faith in this Senſe is ſuppoſed to ſave Men; and that Men are ſuppoſed to be damned for the want of it. Whereas really Faith is repreſented of no uſe in the Religion of the Means [Mean] but what it muſt neceſſarily be of. For Faith is juſt of ſo much uſe to the Believer, as the Propoſition believed has a Tendency to promote his Virtue and Happineſs. He that believes ſuch a Propoſition has all the Advantage of that good Tendency of the Propoſition, from his Belief of it. He that does not believe ſuch a Propoſition, cannot have that Advantage.

Thus

Thus for Inſtance, he that believes that eternal Life, as it is deſcrib'd in Scripture, will be the Inheritance of a Child of God, has all the Motive to Virtue and Piety, and all the Comfort that a Belief of that Propoſition muſt neceſſarily give him. He that does not believe that Propoſition, muſt want that Comfort, and that Motive. So that here is nothing attributed to Faith, as it is here underſtood, but what neceſſarily flows from it: And which is no more than what the Deiſts attribute to Knowledge in natural Religion, tho' Knowledge is no more a Virtue than Faith, but bears exactly the ſame Relation to natural Religion, that Faith does to reveal'd Religion. For Religion, whether natural or reveal'd, muſt begin in Knowledge or in Faith, and muſt from hence ſettle in Temper, and ſo hold on in Practice, that is ever to end in the Rewards reſulting from Virtue, in the Reaſon of Things; or in thoſe Rewards which God has wiſely and bountifully annex'd to Virtue and Piety, by the Revelation he has made of his Will. Indeed if any would carry this a little farther, it may juſtly be ſaid, that Chriſtians aſcribe no more to Faith in reveal'd Religion, not only, than the Deiſts do to Knowledge in natural Religion; but than the Atheiſts do to Knowledge in relation to moral or political Good and Evil.

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Corollary III.

Though the Means of Religion (which is but in other Words the Religion of the Means) have been ſomewhat different in reſpect of Clearneſs, Certainty and Accommodation to the different Circumſtances of Mankind in different Ages; yet theſe Means of Religion have always been beautifully proportioned to the State of Things, and to each other. I mentioned theſe Proportions in the Preface, and referr'd the Reader hither. I will now point out ſome of thoſe Proportions (among numberleſs which occur) in three of theſe Means of Religion; or if you will, in the one great Mean of Religion, differently exhibited and aſcertain'd in three different Diſpenſations; namely, the annexing Life as the promis'd Reward, or Inheritance belonging to Righteouſneſs (in order to keep or make Men righteous) under the Diſpenſation of Innocence, of *Abraham*, and of *Chriſt*: Some of thoſe Proportions ſtand thus. —— The Continuance of an animal Life, in a groſs terreſtrial and corruptible Body, cloath'd however with a Glory, and accompany'd with the Dominion and Bliſs of an earthly Paradiſe, and the high Privilege of converſing ſometimes with the *Shechinah*, was promiſed to the firſt *Adam* (who had no Father but God) in Innocence, or a State

State of Trial, on his paying perfect Obedience to the Law that he was under, without paſſing through Death to it; and a Power in ſome ſort to tranſmit ſuch a Life, in a Body like his own, to his Poſterity. —— A future endleſs Life, in a ſpiritual, celeſtial, powerful and glorious Body, accompanied with the Kingdom, Glory and Bliſs of Heaven, where we are always alſo to behold the Glory of God, and ſee him as he is, without being ſubject to any future Trial, after being a long time under the Power of Death and Corruption, was firſt intimated upon the Loſs of the earthly Paradiſe to *Adam*, and all his Sons, that were ſincere; and was afterwards more expreſly promiſed to *Abraham*, for the ſake of his eminent Sincerity (which under the Name of Faith God counted for Righteouſneſs) and to all his Sons or Seed; or to all Men of any other Family performing ſincere Obedience to the ſame Law: The Reward of Heaven, though greater than that of Paradiſe, being unſeen and future; and the Obedience that Man pays ſince the Fall, though imperfect, being at leaſt equal to the perfect Obedience in Innocence, and in the Poſſeſſion of Paradiſe, conſidering the Weakneſs of Men's Reaſon, and Faith, and the Strength of their Appetites and Paſſions. However, this Promiſe was then publiſhed to none, but the Family of this ſincerely righteous Man: Of which indeed ſuch of other Families as would,

might enquire about it. —— But the higheſt heavenly Life and Glory, after a ſhort Death, without ſeeing Corruption, and an univerſal Power and Dominion is actually conferr'd on the *ſecond Adam*, the holy *Jeſus*, (a Son of *David* by his Mother, but who had no Father but God) of the ſpiritual as well as carnal Seed of *Abraham*, the only begotten Son of God, and the Firſt-born or Begotten of all his Brethren from the Dead, (and therefore by Nature, and the higheſt Preheminence, *the Son of God*) in order to his recovering all to Life, and to his giving that endleſs Life in a Body form'd and faſhion'd by his Spirit, like his own Body, to all the ſincere (his younger Brethren) whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, (according to God's Offer and Promiſe publiſhed by his Command to all,) and in Order to his ſentencing the Inſincere (the Children of the Devil) to the ſecond Death: Whilſt this Life, and the Power of giving Life, is given to him, not only for his being perfectly righteous, or obedient to the ſame Law, in Fleſh, that we are under; but for his having alſo perform'd a perfect Obedience to a peculiar and a higher Law that he voluntarily put himſelf under, even that of the greateſt Self-denial and Abaſement; particularly emptying himſelf of his Glory, taking the Faſhion of a Man, and the Form of a Servant, and becoming obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs, in order to make Men ſincerely Righteous; that

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is, conformed to that lower Law of Self-denial and Abaſement, (or that lower Rule of Righteouſneſs) which they are under.

COROLLARY IV.

That the Father ſhould ſend the Word to take Fleſh, to live a mean Life, and die an ignominious Death, has been the Aſtoniſhment of Angels and Men. I have hinted in the Preface, that to ſay, that *Jeſus* came to give a new Publication of natural Religion, will not account for that amazing Phænomenon. For why might not an inferior Being, or a meer Man, that never exiſted before, as the *Socinians* repreſent Chriſt to have been, have given us ſuch a Publication, as a Prophet ſent from God? Could not a meer Man, or an inferior Being, have ſet us an Example? Aſſured us of the Forgiveneſs of Sins that were paſt? Or of all neceſſary Aſſiſtance for the Time to come? Could not an holy Man have been raiſed from the Dead, and thereby have aſſur'd us, that human Nature might revive? Some indeed have alledged other Reaſons for this great Tranſaction: But I muſt leave them who offer thoſe Reaſons to ſupport them. A Matter of this Conſequence muſt not be truſted to diſputable Points. In the mean time, if the great End of the Chriſtian Revelation be what I have repreſented it in this Eſſay, and hinted

in the foregoing Corollary, *viz.* to aſſure us in the fulleſt Manner that could be, (after the prior Aſſurances of a lower Nature which had been given) of eternal Life, as it is deſcribed in Scripture, and in a Way ſuited to the Reaſon and Proportion of Things; it may let us into ſome further Account of this wonderful Appearance; or at leaſt ſet it in a fuller Light. For who was ſo fit for the Father to make us his adopted Sons by, after we were become the Children of the Devil, and Heirs of Death and Wrath, as his only begotten Son? Who was ſo fit for the living God to give us eternal Life by, as he, to whom he had given to have Life in himſelf, (and to whom alone that high Privilege ſeems fit to be granted) and who we might therefore be aſſured, was able to give it to us? *John* vi. 40——57. Who was at all fit to receive the eternal Spirit of the everlaſting Father, in order to give it to *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* Believers, as the Earneſt of eternal Life, but he that was produc'd before the Creation, [πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, *Coloſ.* i. 15.] and the Firſt-born from the Dead, and thereby had in all Things the Preheminence? His well beloved Son, in whom he was always well pleaſed, *Gal.* iv. 6. And who was ſo fit to be entruſted with that univerſal Power of Government and Judgment, that was neceſſary to ſecure to us, in the fulleſt Manner, the future Poſſeſſion of eternal Life, as he, that was the Heir of all Things?

Things? *The Word*, who *was before all Things*, who was with God, *and was God, by whom all Things were made; the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon?*

Farther, how fit and congruous was it for the Son of God to take Fleſh, in which Appetites and Paſſions had had the Aſcendant, to the loſing Life, in order to his regaining Life by perfect Self-denial and Obedience? *Rom.* viii. 3. To the Intent that we might ſee, that being conformed to him in ſuch a Degree of Self-denial and Obedience as was required of us, was the only Way to recover a better Life than that, which had been loſt by the undue Indulgence which our firſt Parents gave to their lower Powers? What was ſo like to enamour us with Self-denial and Holineſs, the only Way to eternal Life, as ſeeing the Son of God, in ſuch a Body as ours, *holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, going about doing Good?* And what can reconcile us ſo ſtrongly to the Sufferings of this preſent Life, by which *we are to inherit the Kingdom of God*, as ſeeing that *it pleas'd him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings?* Heb. ii. 10. Finally, what can be a greater Support and Encouragement to us, under Self-denial and Sufferings, than to know, that in reward to Chriſt's Self-denial,

denial, Holineſs, and voluntary Abaſement in Fleſh, for the Good of Mankind, he is become the Firſt-born from the Dead, has a glorious Body, and in that glorious Body enjoys the higheſt Degree of heavenly Glory, Honour and Power? Or what can be a greater Security to us, than this Advancement of his, that upon our being conformed to him in the Likeneſs of his Life and Death, we ſhall alſo be conformed to him in the Glory of his Reſurrection?

Corollary V.

The fifth Corollary is, That on peruſing this ſhort Syſtem of Revelation, a very proper Way naturally offers it ſelf of examining Revelation, and the View I have given of it. Revelation is ſuppoſed, according to what has been already ſaid of the Religion of the Means, to be an extraordinary Diſcovery God has mercifully made, to aſſiſt Mankind to act reaſonably, or according to the Truth of Things, under the Weakneſs of their Reaſon, and the Strength of their Appetites and Paſſions, in the low Situation of reaſonable Beings, in which Mankind ſeems to be placed. Let Revelation then be examined by the Deſireableneſs of the End, (in which it entirely agrees with natural Religion,) by the Fitneſs of the one great Mean it has all along propoſed for attaining that

that End; by the Fitneſs of the various Methods by which that one great Mean has been exhibited to Mankind, in their various Circumſtances, in the ſeveral Ages of the World; and by the Beauty and Proportion of the Relations, which thoſe Methods bear to each other: And then let the Syſtem which I have offer'd be examin'd by its Conſiſtency with Revelation, and with it ſelf. If Revelation will bear an Examination by theſe *Criteria*, no reaſonable Man can doubt, whether that Revelation be of God; nor whether the Repreſentation that I have here given of Revelation, agrees in the Main with it. We all allow an Hypotheſis of Nature to be a true Hypotheſis, if it agrees with Nature, and ſolves all its *Phænomena* conſiſtently, as far as we are acquainted with them. *Cartes* beautifully ſays ſomewhere, that if a Man ſhould happen to find out a Key that would decypher a Letter, writ to him in a Cypher, by a Friend, ſo as to make it ſuit the Character and Circumſtances of both the Correſpondents, we might certainly conclude it was the Key by which it had been writ. How much more then may we be aſſured of this in Revelation, where we have all the *Data* before us? Which I ſuppoſe are many more than we have to examine an Hypotheſis of Philoſophy by. In both theſe Caſes we go upon this ſure Principle, that Falſehood will not appear to agree far with Truth; any more than a crooked Line will appear

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(even to no better Eyes than ours) to agree in many Points with a ſtreight one. But if the Rule of Revelation be farther extended than that of Nature, it will ſooner diſcover any Deviation. But I forbear to add more on this Head; having anticipated my ſelf, in a good Meaſure, in the Preface. Nor would it have been ſo proper to have ſaid any Thing on the internal Evidence of Revelation here, were it not to connect it with what I am going to ſay of its external Evidence; and ſo to endeavour to repreſent the Force of the whole Evidence for Revelation in one ſhort view. And when a reaſonable Man lays both of them before himſelf in this manner, how will he be able longer to withſtand it?

By the external Evidence of Revelation, I mean the Marks of great Power or Knowledge, or Wiſdom, which accompany it: Namely, the Miracles, which firſt attended mediate or traditionary Revelation in the Caſe of *Moſes*; and afterwards of *Jeſus of Nazareth*; and then Prophecy, which follow'd in the Religion of *Moſes*; and all the prophetick Gifts of ſeveral Kinds, and in the higheſt Degrees, which follow'd in the Religion of *Jeſus*, on his Aſcenſion to the right Hand of Power; and which muſt be allow'd to be the greateſt of all the external Evidences; whether we conſider the Nature of theſe Gifts (they being not only Marks of the greateſt Power and Knowledge, but of the greateſt Wiſdom

Wiſdom too, being fit means to ſpread the Knowledge of the Chriſtian Religion) or the Repreſentations which the New Teſtament gives of them. If any ſhould pretend that they don't receive the Bible, becauſe they have not leiſure to conſider the external Evidence there is for its being a divine Revelation; let them conſider the internal Evidence, which will take up leſs time; and then no want of leiſure can be pretended as an Excuſe. But above all, let him take care how he rejects Revelation, who has Leiſure and Ability to conſider both. For if a Train of diſtinct Marks of Power, of Knowledge, and of Wiſdom, above what is Human; and if Marks of the greateſt Power, Knowledge and Wiſdom, all joyn'd together in the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, are not ſufficient to atteſt that the wiſeſt Mean, (exhibited differently, but properly and proportionably to Mankind, under different Circumſtances in different Ages) in order to attain the moſt deſirable End, is from God; when this End and Mean ſufficiently recommend themſelves to us, without that Atteſtation, we ſeem to put it out of the Power of God to give us the Favour of a Revelation. For what can be the Stamp of Divinity upon a Revelation, that is it ſelf every Way worthy of God, if Marks of the greateſt Power, Knowledge, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, both in a long Succeſſion, and in Conjunction, be not? Let thoſe who reject ſuch a Revelation,

take care, leſt it be their Condemnation, that *Light is come into the World, but that Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil!*

COROLLARY VI.

When reveal'd Religion appear'd in all this full Luſtre of internal and external Evidence, as it did in the Times of the Apoſtles, the Time when Revelation was fully compleated, it muſt certainly have had very great Effects on Mankind, in informing their Minds, and regulating their Lives. And therefore, as on the one Hand, if there had been no ſuch Effects produc'd, it would be unnatural to ſuppoſe, that the Doctrines of Revelation ever could have had this internal and external Evidence; ſo on the other Hand, the Accounts we have in the Hiſtory of the *Acts* and *Epiſtles*, and in the Writings of the Cotemporaries, and immediate Succeſſors of the *Apoſtles*, of the great Effects it actually produc'd in all the Places where it came, is a further Evidence of the Truth of reveal'd Religion: Since by theſe Hiſtories it appears, that the Effects which were wrought by Revelation in all this Clearneſs and Strength of internal and external Evidence, were in Kind and Degree, juſt what one would naturally expect from that Evidence.

COROLLARY VII.

Such a Deſign, ſuch a Mean, ſuch Methods of diſcovering that Mean to Mankind, ſo related, ſo proportion'd to the State of Mankind, and to each other, ſuch well atteſted Inſtances of Power, Knowledge, and Wiſdom accompanying them, and ſuch Succeſs attending them, are the true and infallible Marks of a Revelation from God; every Thing concurring, that we can now ſuppoſe about it, either *a Priori*, or *a Poſteriori*. What more can be deſired to ſet the Truth and Excellency of divine Revelation in the moſt glaring Light, than to obteſt and conjure reaſonable Men to compare it with the pretended Revelations either of former or later Times? And to ſee, whether they will bear a Trial by theſe Marks, or any Compariſon with the Bible? Beginning from the monſtrous, inconſiſtent, immoral Theology of the Pagans, till we go through the almoſt equally abſurd Syſtem of *Æons* of the firſt Hereticks, and come down to that of *Mahomet*, or of the *Roman Antichriſt*; and of thoſe that have mix'd any of her Corruptions, or their own with the Word of God; even after all the Refinements, any of theſe ſeveral Syſtems have undergone by the greateſt Wits, that have patroniz'd them in the ſeveral Ages of the World. The bare

mention of ſuch of theſe Syſtems, as are made up of nothing at all, or of little elſe, but Falſhood, makes a Trial of them by theſe *Criteria* entirely needleſs; and a farther Compariſon between them and the Bible perfectly ridiculous: To any other Purpoſe at leaſt, than that of a Foil, which it don't at all want. And as this can't be the Place of making a Trial, and Compariſon between the Bible, and theſe Schemes, where there is more Truth mix'd with Falſhood in various Proportions and Degrees; ſo it will not be difficult for thoſe to make this Trial or Compariſon, who are well acquainted with any of theſe compounded Syſtems, and with the ſimple and unmix'd Syſtem of the Bible. All that I ſhall add is, That Revelation ſtands in a proportionable Degree of Oppoſition to every falſe Religion, to the Degree of Falſhood which they contain; and in Conjunction with them, ſo far as they have any Mixture of Truth; as Hereſy always has. In ſo much that it aims at nothing leſs than the total Subverſion of the Pagan Theology, by recalling Men from the Worſhip of many Gods, through many Mediators or Lords, but all of them Patrons of Vice, to the Worſhip of the One only true God, by one Lord or Mediator, even *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, who cleanſes us from all Sin:* Whilſt it directs us, only to purge out the Leaven of Error, Hypocriſy and Malice that is in Hereſy, in order that we may become

come an unleavened Lump of Sincerity and Truth,

COROLLARY VIII.

If we compare Revelation with natural Religion (which the Deiſts with us allow to be true Religion,) they are, as to the Religion of the End the ſame; that is, the Duties that are due to God, to our ſelves, and to one another, in both of them are exactly the very ſame; and whatever has been revealed in any Age of the World, as a Mean to attain that End, has had a natural Fitneſs to promote that End, in the Circumſtances Men then were; though they might not probably have hit upon that Mean: Nor could they without Revelation have ever been aſſur'd, that it was a true one. For though every one ſees, that the Reward of eternal Life, Dominion and Glory, not ſubject to any future State of Trial, and the peculiar Bliſs that reſults from them, is the moſt proper Means to promote Virtue; yet how ſhould we know, that they would be the Reward of Virtue, if God had not revealed it to us? Or how, on the other Hand, could we have known unleſs God had revealed it to us, that wicked Men ſhould be raiſed from the Dead, and after a Trial, according to their Works (by which the Reward of eternal Life is very much heightned)

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be ſentenced to the ſecond Death. Though now we know it, every one muſt allow it to be a powerful Motive to Obedience. And the ſame may be ſaid of all the reſt of the peculiar Doctrines or Precepts of Revelation. As the Doctrine of Mediation, and the Inſtitution of Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper; as I have endeavoured to make appear in the Courſe of this Eſſay: Since natural Religion then is on all Hands allowed to be true, is it not moſt highly probable, that revealed Religion is alſo true, from this Conſideration alone, that revealed Religion has the greateſt Fitneſs to promote natural Religion, in thoſe Points, where they don't coincide? Where one Thing has a Tendency to promote another Thing, we conclude that they ſtand related as End and Mean in other Caſes, both in the natural and moral World; and why then ſhould we not in this? Beſides natural and reveal'd Religion agree thus far farther: That reveal'd Religion is as fit as a Mean; as natural Religion is deſireable as an End: And that as natural Religion may be reduced to one End; ſo revealed Religion, in that which is peculiar to it, may be reduced to one Mean; namely, diſcovering to us the moſt powerful Motive of Obedience, *viz.* the Promiſe of eternal Life, heightned by its being a Salvation from the ſecond Death. So that, on the whole, the Bible appears to contain a Revelation from God, whether we conſider it, in it ſelf,

(*i. e.*

(*i. e.* in the internal and external Evidence which attends it,) or if we compare it with falſe Religions, or with the true. It ſtands in the greateſt Oppoſition to the one, and in the moſt cloſe and the only proper Relation to the other: That is to ſay, of a moſt uſeful Mean to attain it.

COROLLARY IX.

If the Deiſt ſhall ſtill alledge, after all that has been ſaid, that natural Religion don't want the Aid of thoſe ſupernatural Motives, ſince it contains Motives of its own, both of Rewards and Puniſhments, from the neceſſary Conſequences of Things, ſufficient to ſupport Virtue: All that needs be added, is, That more Motives will beget more Virtue. And that Revelation furniſhes us with an additional Motive, and of greater Force, than natural Religion furniſhes us with, will not be denied by any one, on the Suppoſition that the Bible is a Revelation from God. For it acquaints us, that Death is the Puniſhment of Sin, that the Wicked ſhall riſe and undergo a Trial, and receive a Doom to unſpeakable poſitive Miſery; but that the Righteous ſhall not only eſcape the Anxiety of a Trial of uncertain Event, (from the Conſciouſneſs of their own Integrity,) and the Shame and Anguiſh of a Sentence of Condemnation; but tha

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when the Heavens are to be roll'd up like a Scrowl, when the Elements are to melt with fervent Heat, and when the Earth, with all its Works, are to be conſumed and burned up, and the Wicked ſhall be overtaken by this univerſal Conflagration, that God will find out a Way for the Eſcape and Salvation of the Righteous. Revelation farther aſſures us, in the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Manner, that they ſhall, in celeſtial, ſpiritual, glorious and powerful Bodies, inherit the Kingdom prepared for them; and in Manſions of Glory enjoy the moſt glorious Society, and behold the Glory of God himſelf, ſeeing him not only in his Works of Creation and Providence, but *as He is*; and ſhall enjoy this unſpeakable Bliſs and Felicity, without the leaſt Chance of ever looſing it. And what can ſtrike Men, if the greateſt Security of avoiding the utmoſt Miſery, and of enjoying the greateſt Glory, Dignity, Power, Dominion and Bliſs for ever, ſhall not? And yet none can ſay, that the Light of Nature could furniſh us with this Motive, or that the Light of Revelation does not. And what is there, perhaps, but ſome one of all theſe things, (which jointly make up the Motive of Revelation) and that in a poor, low Degree, and of uncertain and ſhort Continuance, that engages us in any of the unwearied Purſuits of our whole Lives? This is ſufficient to ſhew us, how powerful all theſe Conſiderations muſt be when joyn'd together;

and

and how worthy therefore they are of a divine Diſcovery; and conſequently that as Revelation contains a ſtronger and more powerful Motive to Virtue, than we could have diſcover'd by the Light of Nature, it is wiſely calculated to produce more Virtue among Mankind. This it has a Tendency to do in all Caſes; but has a very ſuperior Tendency to do it in ſome: As for Inſtance, in the Caſe of powerful and ſudden Temptation; and particularly in that, where we are reduced to the Neceſſity of loſing our Life immediately, or of ſacrificing our Virtue to ſave it.

COROLLARY X.

If it be farther alledg'd, That Actions, which for the Matter of them are virtuous, yet when perform'd for the ſake of extrinſical or poſitive Rewards, ſuch as Revelation is here ſuppoſed to propoſe to us, (or in other Words, Rewards that don't flow from the Nature of Things) ceaſe to be virtuous, (which is what a late noble, learned and polite Author has very much inſiſted on,) I anſwer; That indeed to be above all Reward or Happineſs, but that which neceſſarily reſults from the Nature of Things, is the higheſt Perfection; but this can belong to no Being, but the unoriginated Father of all Things; who being incapable of any Addition to his Happineſs, can,

when he acts in regard to other Beings, only act to communicate Happineſs to them. But as to Beings capable of additional Happineſs, or of poſitive and extrinſical Rewards, though it muſt be own'd, that their doing good Actions, without feeling Pleaſure in doing them, and without any Regard to thoſe natural Rewards of good Actions, which are the neceſſary Reſult of them, and purely for the additional or extrinſical and poſitive Reward, would deſtroy their Virtue; yet if the extrinſical and poſitive Reward be adequate, and worthy of the Purſuit of a reaſonable Being, it is Virtue to purſue it, and to act with the more Vigor in order to obtain it, not indeed excluſive of the natural Rewards of good Actions, but in Conjunction with them. No Man can doubt, whether it be Virtue to purſue our own true Happineſs; that is, Pleaſure that will not injure our ſelves or other Beings. For what is Virtue but our trueſt Pleaſure and Happineſs? Whether that Happineſs reſults from the Nature of Things, or from ſuch a Connexion, as the Governor of the World has revealed to us to be ſettled by him, makes no difference. And ſure it will be but acting reaſonably, or according to Truth, and the Nature of Things, to purſue more Happineſs with more Vigor, than a leſs Happineſs; from whichſoever of theſe two Originals that Happineſs may be derived.

Beſides,

Beſides, as in the Caſe of the natural Reward of good Actions, to purſue thoſe Rewards, may be ſaid properly enough to be purſuing Virtue it ſelf, both in Fact, and in the Opinion of the Objector; ſo who ſhall ſay, that purſuing the additional and poſitive Rewards of Virtue, (on the Suppoſition of the Bibles being a Revelation from God) is not purſuing Virtue in the ſame Senſe too? Is it not highly probable, that the Glory, Dignity and Dominion, to which we ſhall be advanced, will be for the Service of that Kingdom, that it is the Father's good Pleaſure to give us? Is not purſuing this celeſtial Glory, Dignity and Dominion then purſuing Virtue; or an Opportunity of being uſeful to that Kingdom, over which we, as Kings, are to be placed? The Scripture repreſents the Glory, Dignity and Power of Chriſt, as the Reward of his Obedience; but the Scripture, at the ſame Time, repreſents that that Power is exerciſed for the Benefit of his Kingdom, the Church; and therefore his having an Eye to the Glory that was ſet before him, was purſuing the glorious End for which he died; ſince that Glory was putting him in a Condition to anſwer all the Ends of his Death to Mankind. And may not we expect in our Proportion, ſuch a Kingdom as is prepared for us for the ſame Purpoſe? That ſo as it was given to Chriſt, to ſit down at the Father's right Hand, and to be advanced to univerſal

Empire, with a View to the Good of that univerſal Empire; it may be given to us alſo, to ſit down at his right Hand, and be advanced to ſome particular Province for the greater Good of ſuch a Diviſion? It muſt certainly be great Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the Governor of the World to propoſe additional Rewards in order to encourage reaſonable Beings to purſue their own true Happineſs, and the Happineſs of other Beings, againſt the Difficulties which they have to encounter in that Purſuit. But if it be Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Bounty, in the Governor of the Univerſe, to propoſe theſe additional Rewards to reaſonable Beings, can it deſtroy Virtue in thoſe reaſonable Beings to be mov'd by thoſe additional Rewards? This would be to ſet up a Virtue in the Governed intirely inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Munificence, *i. e.* with the Holineſs of the ſupreme Governor of all Things.

Theſe additional and poſitive Rewards ſeem neceſſary to ſupport the Virtue of all inferior Beings, and particularly to be deſign'd as a Counterballance to the ſtrong Appetites and Paſſions which belong to ours. But God has not propoſed theſe poſitive Rewards ſeparate from the Rewards that are the neceſſary Reſult of virtuous Actions, but in Conjunction with them, or as an Addition to them. If then the Virtue of one Man, inſtead of being ſupported by a joint Regard to poſitive Re-

wards, and the natural Rewards of Virtue, ſhould be hurt and weakened by a ſingle View to poſitive Rewards, then it is he that hurts himſelf, by ſeparating what God has joined together: And he muſt ſuffer for his own Folly, and for the depraved Taſte, from whence alone ſuch a Miſtake could ariſe.

On the whole, I think this Objection of the Deiſts ariſes from too exalted an Idea of our ſelves; ſince none but the ſupreme Being is above additional and poſitive Happineſs. Nor has the Objection any Strength but what it derives, from confounding the ſingle Purſuit of a baſe, mean, low, arbitrary, unfit and ſelfiſh Reward, or of a Reward that is injurious to others; with a joint Purſuit of the natural Rewards of virtuous Actions, and a Purſuit of a poſitive, high, glorious, well adjuſted Reward, and that is calculated to give us farther Opportunities of extending our Benevolence to others: The firſt of theſe is Vitious and Mercenary, the laſt is Virtuous and Heroick.

A NOTE, By Way of APPENDIX, TO THE DISPENSATION of *Abraham*.

Particularly to these Words,

Essay, p. 23. *God now expresly adopted* Abraham *to the Inheritance of eternal Life.*

I TOOK Notice in the Preface, that I had some Notes by me, to explain and support several Things that I have advanced in this Essay; and gave some Reasons why I publish'd the Essay without them, though I at first intended to have finished them together.

I hinted there too, that what I had chiefly ſlung into Notes, was conſequential Proofs of what I have advanced (where I had not expreſs Texts to the Purpoſe) and eſpecially Proofs that were of a critical Nature.

I there alſo acknowledg'd, That I believed ſome of the Things advanced in this Eſſay would be juſtly thought to want that Proof. But I believe nothing I have ſaid will be thought to want it more, than what I have aſſerted about the Diſpenſation of *Abraham*: And therefore I have added here as an Appendix what I ſhould have put in a Note, if the Notes had been finiſh'd and complete.

I have aſſerted, *Eſſay*, p. 23. that *God expreſly adopted* Abraham to the Inheritance of eternal Life. The Proof that I have there given, is, that *God bleſſed* Abraham, and *that God became his God.* I will now endeavour to ſhew more fully, how Adoption to eternal Life is contain'd in theſe two Expreſſions.

But I would firſt deſire the Reader to carry it in his Mind, that the Proof I am to give of this Point, is a Proof from Hiſtory, and not from a Syſtem of Doctrine. This I ſay to ſhew, why the Reader ought not to expect many expreſs Texts to this purpoſe: But only ſuch as may fairly occur from incidental Paſſages in an Hiſtory, which was addreſs'd to a People, who were in a good Meaſure appriz'd of many of the great Facts before, from Tra-

Tradition, and which was written in order to engage them to fear God, from an Account of what his Dealings had been hitherto with Mankind, and what Expectations they might entertain from him for the future.

When *Moſes* therefore tells us, that *the Lord bleſſed* Abraham, *and became his God*, what Ideas are we to ſuppoſe that *Moſes* had, and intended to convey to the *Iſraelites?* And what are the Ideas, we are to ſuppoſe that theſe Expreſſions rais'd in their Minds? It will be readily allowed, that theſe Words are granting Words, (at leaſt the firſt) all along in *Moſes*'s Hiſtory. Nor can it be denied, that it muſt be ſomething of great Importance, that *Moſes* would introduce God as giving to *Abraham*, when *he bleſſed him and became his God*, conſidering that *Abraham* is repreſented as an high and ſingular Inſtance of the greateſt Piety in the degenerate Age wherein he liv'd, and under the greateſt Trials that *Adam*, or any of his Children, ever underwent: And conſidering that *Abraham* was the Father of that Nation, to whom *Moſes* wrote, and at the Head of which he himſelf then was; and which at that Time, God had taken to himſelf, for an holy and a peculiar People.

This we may be aſſured of in the general. But to be a little more particular as to each of theſe Expreſſions, I deſire the following Things may be put together: Many of which are inſiſted on, or hinted at, in ſeveral Parts of the foregoing *Eſſay*. And

And, I. As to the Expreſſion, that *God bleſſed* Abraham; and in relation to this Expreſſion, I deſire it may be obſerved;

1. That God bleſſed *Adam* and *Eve*, and when God gives a Bleſſing, we may be ſure the Grant operates and conveys ſomething that is conſiderable; otherwiſe the Grant would be trifling or illuſory. We find by *Moſes*'s Hiſtory, that what God bleſs'd our firſt Parents with, was *Fruitfulneſs*, Gen. i. 28. *Dominion* over all the other Creatures, *ibid.* *Food*, v. 29. *A pleaſant and fruitful Garden*, Chap. ii. 8—15. with the Means of *Immortality*, viz. *the Tree of Life*, v. 9. and with a *Covering* which was moſt probably a *Glory*: For which I think ſeveral good Arguments may be offer'd, though this is not the Place for them. The Texts in the New Teſtament where this Glory that *Adam* was cloathed in ſeem to be referr'd to, are *Rom.* viii. 3. 1 *Cor.* xv. 42—46. *Philip.* iii. 21. 2 *Cor.* v. 2, 3, 4. *Rom.* iii. 23. All I ſhall farther ſay here is, that they were at *firſt naked, and were not aſhamed*, v. 25. But when they were ſtripp'd of their Glory, they were *afraid* (*not aſhamed*) *becauſe they were naked*, Chap. iii. 10. as well knowing, that the Garment which they had loſt was a Garment of Dignity, a Badge of all the Bleſſings they had from God; and they might well therefore be afraid, when they had loſt it, that they ſhould be depriv'd of all thoſe Bleſſings, upon

hearing God's Voice in the Garden, in the very ſame Manner in which they had received them.

Accordingly on their Diſobedience a Curſe was pronounced on them, inſtead of the Bleſſing. The Curſe on *Eve* ſeems to be a great Degree of Unfruitfulneſs. *I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow, and thy Conception and Sorrow* in bringing forth Children, *v.* 16. in Oppoſition to the original Bleſſing; *Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth*, Chap. i. 28. —— The Curſe pronounc'd on *Adam* was Care, Toil and Sorrow, all the Days of his Life, by reaſon of the Curſe of the Ground: And that he ſhould return to the Duſt out of which he was taken, *Chap.* iii. 17, 18, 19.

2. That there was ſtill a further Curſe pronounc'd and inflicted on the Ground, that *Cain* ſhould till, after he had ſlain his Brother, *Gen.* iv. 12. From whence he (*Cain*) ſeems to have left off tilling the Ground, and to have betaken himſelf to other Arts; ſuch as were neceſſary to build a City, *v.* 17. And his Deſcendants ſeem likewiſe to have quitted the Tillage of the Ground after his Example, and to have turn'd Herdſmen, *v.* 20. Muſicians, *v.* 21. and Artificers in Braſs and Iron, *v.* 22. &c. which alſo agrees with the Hiſtory of *Sanchoniathan*, as well as of *Moſes*.

This further Curſe on the Tillage of the Ground pronounced on *Cain*, and that probably

bly followed his Deſcendants, ſeems to have been a Mark of their being the avowed Family of the Devil, and was agreeable to other Curſes that always followed that Family in future Ages.

3. That it is probable, that *Seth*'s Deſcendants did ſtill Till the Ground, and had a Produce from it, though with great Labour and Toil; but it was reveal'd to *Lamech* about ſix Hundred Years before the Flood, that in *Noah*'s Time they ſhould receive ſome Comfort or Bleſſing concerning the Work and Toil of their Hands, becauſe of the [original] Curſe which the Lord had pronounced on the Ground, *Gen.* v. 29. *viz.* after the Fall: See *Sherlock's more ſure Word of Prophecy.*

4. That after the Flood God took off a great Part of the original Curſe, bleſſing *Noah* and his Sons in many Inſtances, as he did *Adam* and *Eve* at their Creation. God bids them *be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth*, Gen. ix. 1. and thereby probably took off part of the great Sorrow in bearing and in bringing forth Children, that might be the Occaſion of leſs Fruitfulneſs before. We find that *Noah* had but three Sons when he was ſix Hundred Years old, *Gen.* vii. 7. and he is the only Antediluvian whoſe Deſcendants are all enumerated. But we find that though the Age of Man was ſhortned to five Hundred Years immediately after the

Flood, yet *Ham* had four Sons, *Gen.* x. 6. *Shem* five, *v.* 22. and *Japheth* ſeven, *v.* 2. It ſhould ſeem therefore that in Fact, thoſe who lived after the Flood were more fruitful than thoſe who lived before it. But God does not ſtop here, but alſo takes off the Curſe from the Ground, or its Sterility, *Chap.* viii. 21. *I will not* for the Future *curſe the Ground for Man's ſake.* So the *Hebrew* Word ſhould be rendered, as it is, *v.* 22. and ſo the Septuagint has render'd it. He likewiſe promiſes favourable Seaſons, *v.* 22. *Moſes* accordingly obſerves, that after the Flood, *Noah began to be an Husbandman*, Gen. ix. 20. Not barely a Tiller of the Ground for meer Neceſſaries; (that *Noah*'s Anceſtors had been all along) but a Planter of a Vineyard, for the Superfluities of Life: As expecting greater Fertility from the Removal of the Curſe, and the Grant of a Bleſſing. And *Moſes* further acquaints us, that Things anſwered his Expectation: And that his Vintage yielded him but too generous a Juice, unleſs he had made a better uſe of it, *v.* 21.

Laſtly, God reſtores *Noah* and his Sons to a greater Dominion over the Beaſts of the Earth, the Fowls of the Air, and the Fiſhes of the Sea, than they had before, or probably ſince the Fall. Perhaps the making the Beaſts of the Field more tractable, was one way, by which God removed the Curſe of the Ground, and added to its Fruitfulneſs, as well

as

as to the *Food of Mankind.* In every Inſtance of God's Bleſſing any one, we muſt, as has been obſerved already, ſuppoſe ſome Curſe removed, and ſome Favour granted; and in the Caſe of God's Bleſſing *Noah* and his Sons, we ſee the Curſe remov'd in part, or in whole (as far forth as it ſeems to have been God's Deſign to remove it, till there ſhall be no more Curſe) that had been pronounced on Mankind at the Fall; except the laſt part of it, *viz. That Duſt thou art, and to Duſt thou ſhalt return.*

When God bleſſes *Abraham* then, *Gen.* xii. 2. xxii. 17. It muſt, as in the Caſe of our firſt Parents, and in the Caſe of *Noah*, denote the Removing ſome part of the original Curſe, and reſtoring the original Bleſſing in part or in whole; or giving an equal Bleſſing, if not a greater, than the firſt. What leſs can be imported by the Phraſe uſed, *Gen.* xxii. 17. one of the Places I juſt quoted, *In Bleſſing I will bleſs thee?* Eſpecially as it is introduced on ſo great an Occaſion, as the Offering up the Heir of the Promiſe, and as it is confirmed by an Oath. Or what leſs can be imported, when *in him* (or in Bleſſing him) God declares, that *he bleſſed all the Families or Nations of the Earth*, i. e. that ſhould imitate him in his Faith and Obedience? The Bleſſing that aroſe from taking off the other Parts of the Curſe, the reſt of the Families of the Earth, as the Deſcendants of *Noah*, (to whom thoſe

thoſe Bleſſings were granted) partook in already. Now, ſince the other Parts of the Curſe had been removed in the Bleſſing to *Noah* and his Sons, what can this moſt ſolemn Bleſſing of *Abraham*, and in him of all the Nations of the Earth, (in the Language of thoſe early Times, when the Bleſſing and Curſe on our firſt Parents was ſo deeply impreſs'd on their Minds, and ſo thoroughly underſtood,) carry leſs in it, than reſtoring *Abraham* expreſly to Immortality (not indeed without taſting Death, but) from or after Death; the great and moſt bitter Part of the original Curſe, which had not yet been taken away; ſo that this Expreſſion plainly implies *Adoption to eternal Life*, in the Language of theſe Times.

II. I am to ſhew, That *God's* adopting *Abraham* to the Inheritance of eternal Life is included in the other Expreſſion, of *the Lord's being* THE GOD *of* Abraham. And here the Adoption is not implied but expreſſed. And in order to make that out, I would premiſe,

That Sir *Iſaac Newton* has fully proved, *Princ.* p. 482. that the Term *God* is a relative Term; and a Term of Relation that is founded in *Dominion*. That being ſuppoſed, the Term God muſt ſignify the Dominion and Authority of a Father, of a Maſter, or of a King.

For

For all Sorts of Dominion and Authority may be reduc'd to one of theſe.

Now God indeed may figuratively have been always ſaid to be the *Maſter* of Mankind, and they may be ſaid to be his Servants; in as much as in many Things God reſembles a Maſter, and Mankind his Servants; and he is therefore often mentioned as ſuch in Scripture, though never till after the Death of *Abraham:* Yet God is not properly and ſtrictly ever conſider'd as a Maſter, in any part of Scripture, becauſe he has never enter'd into Covenant with Mankind, under the Notion of a Maſter with his Servants.

In like manner, God may always figuratively have been ſaid to have had a *Kingdom* ruling over all; in as much as there are many Reſemblances between God's Power over all Things, and the Power a King has over his Subjects. But God is never ſo much as mentioned as a King, even incidentally, in Scripture, till about the Time that he by Covenant at *Mount Sinai* became the *King* of the *Iſraelites.* Nor had he a People till then. And afterwards indeed, he alſo by Covenant became the ſupreme King of all *Chriſtians*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles.*

But God had Children, or a Family, before he had a Kingdom and a People; even from the firſt Man and Woman. And therefore whenever the Term *God* occurs in Scripture, before either of the Periods, in which the ſu-

preme Being became by Covenant the King of the *Iſraelites*, and of the *Chriſtians*, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe; the Term *God* muſt import the other Relation of Power and Authority, *viz.* that of a *Father*; agreeably to the Authority that then prevailed in the World, which was Family or Patriarchal; and that God muſt, from the very Nature of Things, have been ever conſidered as a Father, even in the patriarchal Period, before he was a King over a People, will fully appear from what follows.

1. That *Adam* was *created* an earthly and animal *Son of God*; having no other Father but God; being made like him in his moral Perfections; and veſted with Dominion, the Bliſs of Paradiſe, Glory and Immortality; as an Inheritance ſuited to the high Relation he bore to God. All which carries in it the whole Notion of a Father, in the moſt ſtrict, proper, and preciſe Senſe of the Word.

2. That *Adam* by his Diſobedience *loſt* the moral Image or Likeneſs of God; and was thereupon diveſted of the Inheritance of a Son of God; driven out of Paradiſe, kept from Returning to it, made ſubject to Toil, Care, Vexation, Diſeaſes and Death; and inſtead of the Glory which he had in Innocence, a Badge of his Sonſhip to God, God made him Coats of the Skins of Beaſts, as a Cloathing that might ſerve to ſhew him, to what

what a low State he had reduced himſelf, by ſuffering his Appetites and Paſſions to get the better of his Reaſon. From whence this Moral was plainly held forth, That he *being in Honour, and without Underſtanding, was become like the Beaſts that periſh.* Eſſay, *p.* 10. God alſo gave him a plain Intimation, that if he would continue to obey the Serpent, he muſt ſhare in his peculiar Curſe, *Eſſay*, p. 14, 15.

3. That *Adam* forfeited this Inheritance, not only for himſelf, but for his Poſterity; begetting Men not in the Image or Likeneſs of God; Heirs of Dominion, Bliſs, Glory and Immortality; but in *his own Likeneſs, after his Image, Sons of Men, and Heirs* of his Curſe: Namely, Toil, Care, Vexation, Diſeaſes and Death. *Eſſay*, p. 10, 11.

4. That *Cain* being born an Heir of the Curſe, and at laſt not barely continuing a Son of Man, but becoming the Seed of the Serpent, imitating and obeying him (in being a Liar and a Murtherer, as he was) notwithſtanding God's gracious Admonition and Caution to the contrary, became the Head and Founder of the avowed Family of the Devil in the World; and was accordingly mark'd as ſuch by peculiar Curſes, that ſeem to have follow'd him and his Poſterity. *Eſſay*, p. 14, 15.

5. That notwithſtanding this, whoever from the Sons of Men, and Heirs of Death, became like unto God, reſembling him in Pu-

rity, Juſtice and Mercy, might form Inferences and Hopes, that he might become a Son or a Child of God, through Adoption to a ſuitable Inheritance; though perhaps without knowing what that Inheritance ſhould be. *Eſſay*, p. 16. A Child of this Character God gave to our firſt Parents in *Seth*, inſtead of *righteous Abel*, whom *Cain* ſlew. He and his Deſcendants were the avowed Family of God in the World, *being called by his Name*, Gen. iv. 26. And being expreſly ſtiled the Children or *Sons of God*, Gen. vi. 1. *Eſſay*, p. 15, 16.

6. To give the Sons of God a more aſſured and lively Notion of what their Inheritance by Adoption was, God tranſlated *Enoch*; thereby aſſuring good Men, that they ſhould enjoy a future State of Happineſs in Soul and Body. For *Enoch* was tranſlated after being the firſt that propheſy'd, and after he had all along walked with God, as *Adam* had done in Innocence, who had convers'd with the *Shechinah* in the Garden, till Sin and Guilt made him afraid of him, depart from him, and hide himſelf. Good Men of that Age muſt have concluded by the Rules of Proportion, that though *Enoch*'s eminent and diſtinguiſh'd Piety was rewarded with Immortality by Tranſlation; yet that a lower Degree of Piety than his, if ſincere, would meet with Immortality as its Reward, in ſome Way, and at ſome Time or another. *Eſſay*, p. 17.

7. There could not be a Proof of a more wic-

wicked Diſpoſition, than for any *of the Sons of God* to marry with the *Daughters of Men*, i. e. the Daughters of the Family of the Devil; not only as theſe Marriages were againſt God's Order, and the Interpoſition of his Providence, but as it was expreſſing the utmoſt Contempt of the Inheritance of God's Family; and as it was at the ſame Time a caſting off all Fear of the peculiar Curſe, that was the Inheritance of the Family of the Devil; and therefore, thoſe of the Family of God, who made ſuch Intermarriages, muſt thereby have become the Family of the Devil. *Eſſay*, p. 18.

8. *Noah*, being the *only righteous* Perſon, or the only Perſon *who walked with God*, and abſtained from this impious Mixture, was the only Perſon treated as a *Son of God*, by the peculiar Protection God vouchſafed him and his Family from the total Deſtruction, which he ſent on the avowed Family of the Devil. *Eſſay*, p. 18, 19.

9. *Noah* intimates, that the *Lord would be the God of* Shem, *Gen.* ix. 26. Or the Father of *Shem*, in a Way, in which he would not (at leaſt immediately) be the Father of *Japheth*, the elder Brother, or of *Canaan*, the Son of *Ham*. All which is prophetically ſaid, not of the Perſons of *Shem*, *Japheth* or *Canaan*; but of their Deſcendants. *Eſſay*, p. 20.

10. Accordingly the Deſcendants of *Canaan* had great and peculiar Curſes attending

them, in the Diſperſion of *Babel*, the Deſtruction of the Cities of the Plain, the Extirpation of the Seven Nations, *&c. Eſſay*, p. 21.

11. On the other Hand, God expreſly *bleſs'd* Abraham, a Deſcendant of *Shem*, (and the only one who had walk'd before God, and kept himſelf free from Idolatry) *and became* HIS GOD: Which God had never expreſly promis'd to be to any one before, ſince the Fall. *Eſſay*, p. 23, 24.

12. Hence it is, that God, and Father, or Terms that imply them, are Terms reciprocally us'd in the *Old Teſtament*; and join'd together in the *New*, *Gen.* iv. 26. vi. 2. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 26. *Hoſea* i. 9, 10. *John* xx. 17. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16, 18. *Rev.* xxi. 7. So that to be a God, is in the Language of Scripture, to be a Father; at leaſt in the patriarchal Period. And for God to be a Father to one, who is not created, or born, or begotten a Son of God, is to be a Father by Adoption; and to be a Father by Adoption, is to give an Inheritance in Title, if not in Poſſeſſion; and the Inheritance that God gives as a Father, is Dominion, Bliſs, Glory and Immortality. *Eſſay*, p. 16. Though it muſt be own'd, that after the Lord became the King of the *Jews* by Covenant, and afterwards the ſupreme King of *Chriſtians*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, *God* may ſignify King as well as Father; and which of theſe that Term ſignifies, muſt be determin'd by the Context. See *Pſal.*

v. 2.

v. 2. lxviii. 24. cxlv. 1. *John* xx. 17. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16, 18. *Rev.* xxi. 3. compared with *v.* 7.

13. Hence it is, that Chriſt proves the Reſurrection of good Men (for about them is the Queſtion) to the *Sadducees*, from *Moſes calling the Lord the God of* Abraham, *Luke* xx. 37. I ſhall only quote this Paſſage hiſtorically, or as a Proof of what the *Jewiſh* Notions were about this Matter, but not as holy Writ: ſince I am here treating with the Deiſts, who don't allow that there is any ſuch Thing. In order to ſee the full Force of our *Saviour*'s Argument, it muſt be obſerv'd,

(1.) That the Queſtion the *Sadducees* moved is about the Reſurrection of the Man, and not about the Exiſtence of the Soul in a ſeparate State; not only becauſe the *Sadducees* are here deſcribed *as denying the Reſurrection*, (v. 27.) but becauſe the Argument they uſe to ſupport their Opinion, relates to the Man, and not to the ſeparate State of the Soul. It being an Argument drawn from Marriage, *v.* 28——34.

(2.) That the Queſtion moved by the *Sadducees* is not about the Reſurrection of good and bad Men, but of good Men only. For the Argument they bring againſt a Reſurrection ſuppoſes a State of Happineſs and Enjoyment at the Reſurrection, which can only belong to the Juſt. For their Argument is, that there can be no Reſurrection of good Men, becauſe ſeven Brethren, who had one Wo-

Woman to Wife ſucceſſively in this Life, could not all of them poſſibly have her to Wife together after the Reſurrection.

(3.) That our Saviour's Argument to prove the Reſurrection, *v.* 37. does not lie in theſe Words, *I AM the God of* Abraham, becauſe they are not ſo quoted here. But *Moſes CALLETH THE LORD THE GOD OF* ABRAHAM. And becauſe though our Tranſlators have rendered *Matth.* xxii. 32. *I* am *the God*, &c. yet that Word is not in the Original: But only [εγω Θεος] I *the God of* Abraham.

(4.) The Force of the Argument therefore lies in theſe Words, *the Lord is*, or *is called*, *THE GOD OF* ABRAHAM: That is, the Father of *Abraham*, viz. by Adoption: And that the Adoption of God is Immortality, and what accompanies Immortality. For Chriſt had ſaid juſt before, that the *Children or Sons of God are Children or Sons of the Reſurrection.* And he adds, *God is not the God* [or the Father] *of the Dead* [i. e. of good Men that are Dead for ever, which was what the *Sadducees* meant by Dead] *but of the Living* [i. e. of ſuch good Men as ſhould live again] which was the Point the *Sadducees* deny'd. For God can't give Immortality, *&c.* as an Inheritance, either in Title or Poſſeſſion, to ſuch as are irrecoverably dead; but to ſuch only as ſhall be living. And without giving that Inheritance

tance in Title or Poſſeſſion, he can't be a Father by Adoption. And Chriſt immediately adds, *All*, that is, all good Men, ſuch as *Abraham*, &c. *live* [or ſhall live] *with him* (as the Words may be rendered) *viz* in the other World. If it had not been underſtood among the *Jews*, that God and Father were the ſame Thing; and that being a God of any one, implied Adoption, or the Inheritance of Immortality, to every one that was not a Son by Creation, Birth or Generation, the *Sadducees* would never have been ſilenc'd by this Argument. But it is plain this was a Notion received among the *Jews*, ſince the *Sadducees* make no manner of Reply. And that it was ſo, farther appears from the *Jewiſh* Writings both before Chriſt and ſince. In the Book of *Wiſdom*, ch. ii. 16, 20. it is ſaid, *He pronounced the latter End of the Juſt bleſſed, and boaſts that he has God for his Father. Let us cut him off with a ſhameful Death.* For *if the juſt Man be the Son of God, he will receive him.* —— *And* v. 22, 23. *They ſpake becauſe they knew not the Myſteries of God; nor hoped for the Reward of Holineſs, nor diſcerned the Recompence of the blameleſs Souls. For God made Man for Incorruption, and to be an Image of his own Immortality. And* ch. iii. 1, 4, 7. *The Souls of the Righteous are in the Hands of God, and their Hope is full of Immortality. In the Day of their Viſitation they ſhall ſhine.*

And

And *ch.* v. 1, 4, 5. *Then ſhall the Righteous ſtand with great Boldneſs before the Face of them that afflicted them, and they ſhall ſay, we Fools counted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour, but now is he numbered among the Sons of God, and his Portion is with the Saints.* The ſeven Sons mentioned in *Maccabees* are ſtill called *Children of the Stock of* Abraham, by *Joſephus.* And as the Book of *Maccabees* ſtill introduces them, declaring, that *God would raiſe them to Life eternal,* 2 Macc. vii. 9, 23. ſo *Joſephus* likewiſe introduces *their Mother comforting* them with theſe Words of *Solomon, Wiſdom is a Tree of Life to them that do her Will*; and thoſe of *Ezekiel, Shall theſe dry Bones live?* and with the Words of God, in the Song of *Moſes, I kill, and I make alive.* He alſo declares of theſe Martyrs, *That dying for God, they alſo lived with God, as did* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *and all the Patriarchs, and ran in the Way of Immortality. He ſpeaks of a Reviviſcence of all that obſerve the Law of* Moſes, *though they die for it*; and adds, *That God hath granted them to receive a better Life in Reverſion.* Joſeph. de Macc. p. 1101. I. F. p. 1100. D. p. 1090. A. p. 1097. D. Contra App. l. 2. p. 1076. A. B.

The ſtrongeſt Paſſages might be brought to this Purpoſe, from the Writings of the Apoſtles, if thoſe we have here to do with would allow of their Authority.

FINIS.

ADDENDA.

I Will here ſubjoin what may farther ſerve to prove, That God adopted *Abraham* to the Inheritance of eternal Life, though it ſlipp'd me, when I wrote the foregoing *Eſſay*, and the Text from whence I draw my Proof, was ſuggeſted to me by a learned Friend, after I had ſent the *Eſſay* to the Preſs. The Proof I intend to offer is from *Gen.* xv. 6. *And he* [*Abraham*] *believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for Righteouſneſs.* *Abraham*'s Belief in the Lord is always repreſented, both in the Old and the New Teſtament, as a Principle that influenced his whole Conduct; making him, at God's Command, quit his idolatrous Country and Friends, travel into a Country he did not know, and where he was not known; profeſs his Faith in the One true God, and teach his Family to fear and worſhip him, notwithſtanding the Dangers it expoſed him to, in a wick-

ed and idolatrous, as well as a ſtrange Land; making him, moreover, ſubmit to the painful Rite of Circumciſion, put away *Hagar* and his Son *Iſhmael*, and at laſt be ready to offer up his only legitimate Son *Iſaac*, the Heir of the Promiſe. This is ſufficiently underſtood.

However, ſuch a Faith as this was not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, Righteouſneſs (which is an entire, perfect and conſtant Conformity to the original Law of the great Father of our firſt Parents;) but it was what God now aſſured *Abraham*, *Adam*'s Deſcendant by *Seth* and *Shem*, that he mercifully *counted*, or *reckoned for Righteouſneſs*: Declaring this now as the gracious, and abated or ſecondary Rule of his Family here below, That he, who from a Belief of his Truth and Power, would regulate the Main of his Conduct, according to the Rule he had given him, ſhould be counted Righteous; though he might, through the Suddenneſs of ſome great Surprize, and the Strength of his Appetites or Paſſions, ſometimes deviate from it; as *Abraham* in ſome Inſtances did. Now we are ſure, that the Reckoning or Judgment of God is juſt. For the Righteouſneſs of a Man is a Conformity of the Temper and Actions of a Man to ſome Rule that he is under. And when the Judge, who has a competent Juriſdiction, pronounces that a Man has acted up to that Rule, that Man may then be properly ſaid to be Righteous;

ous; though the Rule by which he is judg'd, be a Rule of fit and proper Grace, Relaxation, and Favour, (from a Weakneſs and Inability to obſerve the firſt and original Rule) and not that firſt ſtrict and original Rule it ſelf.

Now it ſeems to have been the original Connexion and Conſtitution of Things, ſettled and framed by the wiſe Contriver and Diſpoſer of all Things; that Life (that is, Exiſtence and Enjoyment or Happineſs) ſhould be the Conſequence of Righteouſneſs; or of a Conformity to the Law or Rule Man was under: And that Death (that is a Ceſſation of Exiſtence and Enjoyment or Happineſs) ſhould be the Conſequence of Unrighteouſneſs.

Thus, at leaſt, it appears plainly, that in Fact it has been in all God's Diſpenſations. The Tree of Life, which was in the midſt of the Garden of *Eden*, was a full Declaration, that if *Adam* was obedient or righteous, he ſhould live. And he was expreſly threaten'd, that if he was diſobedient or unrighteous, he ſhould die. That Threatning farther implied, and very ſtrongly, that if he was not diſobedient or unrighteous, he ſhould not die, that is, that he ſhould live.

By the Law of *Moſes*, *Every one was curſed, that continued not in all Things written in the Law to do them*, Deut. xxviii. 26. *Gal.* iii. 10. *And the Soul that ſinned was*

to die, Ezek. xviii. 4. See alſo 1 *Sam.* xii. 13. On the contrary, Obedience to the Law of *Moſes* was the *Righteouſneſs of* the Children of *Iſrael*, Deut. vi. 25. The Law farther ſays expreſly, *That he that follow'd what was altogether juſt ſhould live*, Deut. xvi. 20. xxx. 6. And as God firſt, the Prophet afterward ſays, of all God's Statutes and Judgments, that if *a Man do them, he ſhall live in them*, Lev. xviii. 5. Ezek. xx. 11, 19, 21. See *Luke* x. 25, 28. Rom. x. 5. See *Eſſay*, p. 35.

Thus it is plain Things have ſtood by the Law of *Moſes* and of Innocence. But this original Connexion or Conſtitution ſeems more over founded in the natural and neceſſary Order of Things, which ſeems to be this; That if a reaſonable Being, which, as he is capable of a Rule, muſt be always under one, acts up to that Rule, and thereby anſwers the End of his Being, he ſhould go on to be, and enjoy: As on the other Hand, when it is plain, that he would not act up to that Rule, and anſwer the End of his Being, he ſhould ceaſe to be. Righteouſneſs has a natural Tendency to Life and Happineſs, and would produce it, were it not for external Cauſes, that hinder it: And Unrighteouſneſs has a natural Tendency to Death, either by being contrary to our Health, to Peace with our Neighbours, and (both from that Conſideration, and immediately) to the Peace of our own Minds.

Agree-

Agreeably hereto the Scripture repreſents Things; not only in the Law of *Moſes*, when it tells us, that *Righteouſneſs is our Life*; That is, ſo naturally, ſo cloſely, ſo inſeparably connected with Life, as that it may be ſaid to be Life it ſelf; but in the Law of Chriſt, when it alſo tells us, that *The Wages of Sin is Death, whilſt the Gift of God is eternal Life*, Rom. vi. 23. It farther adds, that *He that keepeth the Commandments of God hath a RIGHT to the Tree of Life*, Rev. xxii. 14. That *He that ſoweth to his Fleſh ſhall of the Fleſh reap Corruption, and he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap Life everlaſting*; as the natural Production of ſowing to the one, or to the other, *Gal.* vi. 8. And laſtly, it aſſures us, to this purpoſe, by a Similitude from animal Productions, as it did in the laſt Place by a Similitude taken from the encreaſe of Vegetables, That *Luſt when it is conceived, bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth Death*, James i. 15.

All this is ſo exactly true, and in ſo exact a Proportion, that Chriſt the Righteous, who was not only perfectly Righteous, by the original Law, that Man was ever under; but by a ſuperior and extraordinary Law of Righteouſneſs, (which from his extraordinary love of Righteouſneſs, and his extraordinary hatred of Iniquity, he voluntarily put himſelf under, by virtue of which alone, he who

was

was perfectly righteous became ſubject to Death) had not only Life (in a few Hours after Death, without ſeeing Corruption) for himſelf, but in himſelf; that is, a Power to give it to all that ſhall be for the Main conform'd to him in the lower Rule of Righteouſneſs, he was under; as much, as all die, who are conform'd to *Adam* in Sin and *Unrighteouſueſs*, or in a Deviation from that lower Rule of Righteouſneſs. So that as Death actually enter'd the World by *Adam*'s Sin, Life enters by Chriſt, by his Obedience, as the firſt Fruits of them that ſleep. See *Rom.* v. 12——21.

In fine, as thus we ſee, that Righteouſneſs and Life are in fact inſeparably connected, in the three great Diſpenſations of God to Mankind, in the Reaſon of Things, and in ſeveral plain Aſſertions of Scripture, and in an exact Proportion to that Degree of Righteouſneſs the righteous Perſon had; it follows, that when God declared to *Abraham*, *that he counted his Faith for Righteouſneſs*, God declared, that *Abraham* ſhould inherit Life. But indeed, there is this difference between inheriting Life by virtue of the ſtrict original Rule, and inheriting it by virtue of the ſecondary and equitable Rule; that he that obſerves the original and ſtrict Rule of Righteouſneſs perfectly and conſtantly, ſhall enjoy Life without taſting Death and Corruption, as a Debt: Whereas, he that only conforms to the ſecondary and equi-

equitable Rule of Righteouſneſs, yet yielding ſometimes to the Law of Unrighteouſneſs, he ſhall indeed taſte of Death and Corruption for ſome Time, but ſhall ſtill indefeaſibly inherit Life, after being recovered from Death and Corruption, (though ſtill by a well proportion'd Grace and Favour) and be ſav'd from the ſecond Death, or from Wrath to come. To which purpoſe ſee *Rom.* iv. 2——9.